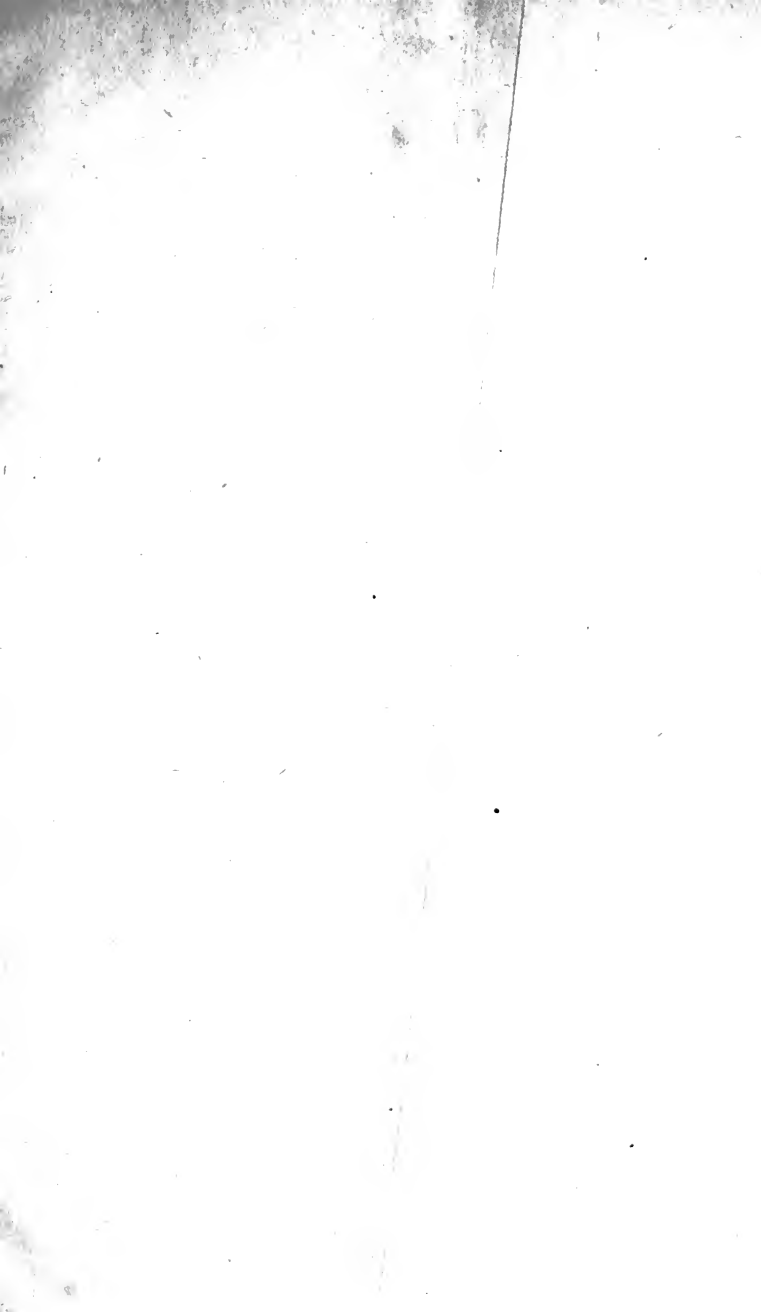


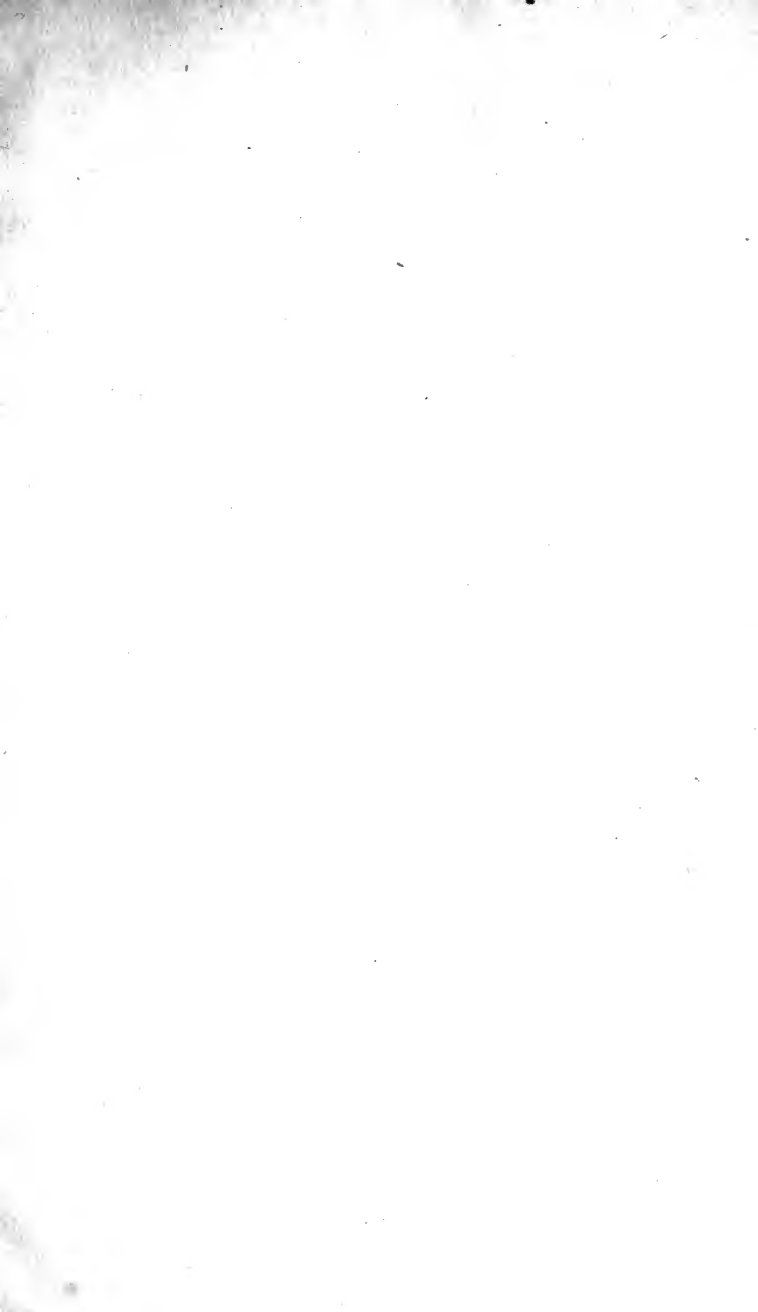
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A YEAR  
AT  
HARTLEBURY  
OR  
THE ELECTION.

BY  
CHERRY AND FAIR STAR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# A YEAR AT HARTLEBURY.

## CHAPTER I.

### MR. BOHUN COMMENCES HIS PERSONAL CANVASS:

THE next morning, amid the ringing of bells and the cheers of the populace, Mr. Bohun, attended by Col. Neville, Mr. Chace, and Mr. George Gainsborough, and half-a-dozen of the most influential of the un-whigged Liberals, commenced his personal canvass of Fanchester. In spite of the most adverse circumstances, it was by no means an unfavorable one. The

Whigs rather alarmed, wrote up to town for their champion to come down instantly. The Tories not sorry to see a split in the hostile camp, watched the fray with renewed hopes. After a long morning's work, Mr. Bohun made a speech of two hours' duration, from Mrs. Escott's balcony, to the multitude. It was impossible to decide in which he was most happy, his advocacy of popular rights, or his tirades of the pseudo-popular party. Invective and ridicule were showered unsparingly upon the Ministers whom, a few days before, the good people of Fanchester had believed to be the saviours of the nation, because they were told so by the newspapers, and any reflection upon whom they would have resented with cabbage-stalks and brick-bats. After the speech, another express was sent off by the

alarmed Whigs for their man, who a month ago was huzzaed round the town. Mr. Bohun passed the evening in haranguing the Benefit Societies, and inoculating them with his new system of politics. His arguments and his manners were alike irresistible. They were equally astonished at his fluency and his fun ; and when he refreshed himself after an oration, by smoking with the greatest nonchalance a pipe of shag - tobacco, the victory seemed decided. All the benefit societies agreed that they had not only at length found the man they wanted, a true patriot, but that Bohun, "the friend of the people," smoked a pipe better than any man in the whole county of ——shire.

Never was a country town in such a state of agitation. It seemed that nobody ever thought

of going to bed. Long past midnight, groups of persons were still loitering about, and ever and anon, night was made hideous by a lusty cheer from some still illuminated public house. Even the children in arms were taught by their enraptured mothers to lisp, "Bohun for ever," that charming young man, who had a smile and a compliment for every petticoat : not an urchin passed the dwelling of a Whig leader without saluting the trembling owner with the odious watchword.

At length Mr. Bohun returned to the castle, flung himself on a sofa, slept for two hours like Napoleon or Wellington in the midst of a pitched battle, woke, took his bath, and by break of day was again on horseback with his train, apparently in every part of Fanchester and its extensive boundaries at the same moment.



“What shall we do this morning?” said Mr. Chace.

“Agitate,” replied his principal, “agitate, agitate. That magic word is the essence of all political success.”

“What shall I do, Bohun?” said George Gainsborough.

“Anything you like my dear fellow, only agitate, agitate, agitate.”

So off they scampered agitating, over downs and commons, highways and byeways; hedges did not stop them; the astonished farmers were prepossessed in favour of a candidate who always rode on before his committee, and without any ceremony leaped the five-bar gates of their farm-yards.

George Gainsborough was a Patroclus worthy of this Achilles, and shared his popu-

larity. Col. Neville was an admirable rider, but George Gainsborough could talk as well as ride. The town of Fanchester fairly lost their senses. By ten o'clock, Mr. Bohun and his friends, splashed to their chins, were again caracoling down the High street. His train swelled every instant; every man who could mount a horse was with the Squire, all covered with green ribbons, Mr. Bohun only wore in his breast a sprig of myrtle presented to him by Miss Molesworth.

But with all this superficial appearance of triumph, the career of the new candidate was by no means so prosperous as it appeared. The Whig party at Fanchester was very strong. The oligarchy of the High street were in general Whigs. Fanchester boasted of several considerable manufactories. Their masters,

sleek sectarians of all denominations, who under the pretence of anti-slavery meetings, bible societies, and missions "to the heathen," were in fact always sapping the foundations of that church which was the only barrier against their barbarising creeds and customs again inundating the land, were all of course, supporters of the present administration, and full of what they called, "gratitude" to Lord Grey. This click, though not numerous, was very powerful. Many a mortgage did they hold on the property of their less prosperous fellow-townsmen ; many a small sum, at hard interest and short dates, were they in the habit of lending to the industrious without capital. This click hated Mr. Bohun. They hated him because he was a gentleman, they hated him because he had not a snub nose, because he

was suspiciously curious in his linen, because his coat was not cut after their fashion, and because he rode thorough bred horses: they hated him because he was always courteous to those over whom they tyrannised. No tyrants in the world like the sectarian oligarchy of a country town! A high Whig is at least grand in his haughtiness. He is a tyrant, but a tyrant on a great scale. He loves a coercion bill, he cares not how many infants may be sacrificed to the bloody Moloch of Manufacturing industry, but then he can talk of the bill of rights, and advocate the immediate emancipation of the Niggers; but a low Whig is the least human of all the combinations of human matter, for soul we cannot concede to those wretches with contracted minds and cold hearts. If ever a revolution come round in this

once happy country, we may trace all our misery to the influence of the low Whigs. These are the real causes of Manchester massacres, though they are always abusing the magistracy ; these are the men who, though they think they are only snuffing the candle in their own miserable hard-hearted parlours, are in fact lighting the torch of every incendiary in the kingdom. How the low Whigs did hate Mr. Bohun ! They hated him with that intense predisposition of enmity, which cold-blooded, calculating, unsympathetic, selfish mortals always innately feel for a man of genius, a man whose generous and lively spirit always makes them ashamed of their dead, dunghill-like, existence.

Not knowing how to meet the electrical effect of Mr. Bohun, they all declared that he was insincere. Narrow-minded, short-sighted

people, who never act but from some gross impulse of immediate interest, unless their miserable minds can detect the quid pro-quo of every act of your conduct, always consider you a Charlatan. But the truth is, it was not merely a generous and confident spirit that made Mr. Bohun our advocate, and a strenuous advocate of popular rights, and even of their extension. That he was ambitious there is no doubt, and who but fools are not ambitious? but he had too great a stake in the existing order of society to precipitate a revolution, though he intended to ride the storm, if the hurricane did occur. And this I think was his duty. It is the fashion now "to go along with the people," but I think the people ought to be led, ought to have ideas given them by those whom nature and education have qualified

to govern states and regulate the conduct of mankind.

Whatever might have been Mr. Bohun's fancies when absent from his country, his keen brain, on his return, soon detected the spirit of the Reform Bill. He saw it was a Whig measure, and not a democratic one. He perceived that its only object was to destroy the balance of parties in the state, and that it intrenched in power a party who by the course of circumstances, had become pledged to an anti-national policy. Mr. Bohun cared nothing about the wretched struggles of factions, but he wished to be the subject of a great empire, and not to sink into the miserable citizenship of a second-rate island. He knew the Tories could never have remained so long in power, unless they had maintained a national policy :

he knew the Whigs, in expelling them from their places, were bound to maintain an adverse system, and therefore he foresaw the dismemberment of the Empire. This was the reason he opposed the Whigs.

Mr. Bohun, with great talents, extensive experience, and a mind imbued with all the profound and comprehensive spirit of modern philosophy, was not insensible to the change which must occur in the relations between the governors and governed. As a theoretical politician, he admitted this change, perhaps in its greatest possible extent: as a practical politician, he thought it the duty of a great statesman only to effect that quantity of change in the country whose destiny he regulated which could be achieved with deference to its existing constitution. As a general principle,



he considered the existing constitution the fair guage of the civilization of a country and its capability of amelioration. As a statesman, he would have proposed measures for England which would have received his opposition in Spain, and he would have legislated for France very differently to what he was prepared to do for his own country.

Mr. Bohun considered the Whigs as a party of political swindlers, who had obtained power by false pretences. They had been permitted to enter office on the pretence of making those changes which the spirit of the age required: instead of effecting this purpose, their only object had been to root up the power of their opponents, and to destroy that happy balance of parties in the state, which in an aristocratic country is indispensable to the freedom and

felicity of the mass. Mr. Bohun was of opinion that with the present machinery of the constitution, it was almost impossible to dislodge the Whigs from office, and as they were pledged to pursue an anti-national policy, he consequently considered the country in imminent peril. He was desirous of seeing a new party formed, which while it granted those alterations in our domestic policy which the spirit of the age required, should maintain and prosecute the ancient external policy by which the empire had been founded, and of this party he wished to place himself at the head—a position which his high lineage—his splendid fortune—and his superior talents, justified him in contemplating. Deeming the dismemberment of the empire the necessary consequence of the Whigs long remaining in office, Mr. Bohun

was of opinion that we should get rid of the Whigs at any price, and as he considered that result was impossible, according to the new constitution, he was the advocate of movement. Perceiving that the nomination of representatives, in the vast majority of the towns, was in the hands of the Sectarian low Whig Oligarchy, he thought that the only mode by which this barbarising power could be destroyed was to expand the Whig constituency into a national constituency. Mr. Molesworth and some of the old Tories denounced these doctrines as revolutionary, and thought Mr. Bohun mad, or only amusing his audience; but Mr. Molesworth, though a sensible man, spoke on this subject from prejudice, and not from thought.

The nucleus of the Tory party at Fanchester was the corporation. The corporation

was most unpopular. Their chief was a jolly brewer—a regular John Bull—a member of the Pitt club,—and an abhorrer of the French. He was unpopular as a mayor, but as a man was, nevertheless, the favourite of the town. The populace laughed even when they gave him a gentle hoot. He was a portly man, with a rubicund visage, very shrewd, and nothing of a bigot. He loved to go to church in state, with his robes and aldermen—his beadels and silver maces. He was the chief supporter of Sir George Vavasour, the Tory candidate, and held up his head, though no one knew better that Toryism was at a terrible discount. However, the jolly brewer always put a good face upon public affairs, and talked of “re-action.” He had faith in the good common sense of Englishmen, and though he

daily declared that the country had been irretrievably ruined by Catholic emancipation, and that for his part, he did not know where the constitution was, he was equally regular in his asseverations of his readiness to die for it any day of his life.

## CHAPTER II.

### ARRIVAL OF TWO OTHER CANDIDATES, AND THE CONSEQUENCES.

It was nearly three o'clock, and the people were gathering, in expectation of another speech from Mr. Bohun. The popular candidate and his committee were canvassing in the environs. It was three o'clock—the crowd was gathering fast.

“I hope he will give it them to-day; eh

Tim!" said a mechanic to his comrade, wiping his toiling brow.

"Oh, he'll play old Harry with them. You leave him alone!"

"My eye, though—don't I wish Lord Grey was here, just to hark a bit."

"He'll hark soon enough. I'll bet two bob now, Bohun comes in."

"My eye though—if he had only started a little earlier, eh Tim!"

"Oh! we'll bring him in yet—we'll bring him in on the shoulders of the people. It's the like of him we want. He don't want no place—not he."

"Place," said Mr. Gregson, a hair-dresser, who shaved the chief Whigs, "what should he want place for? He ay'nt a needy aristocrat. No fear of his feeding on the witals of the

people.—That's what I said to my wife She's just mad for Bohun—ay'nt she though?—  
'Leave me alone,' says I, 'I knows my duty.' He sha'nt lose it for me—and that's plump and plain."

"Go it Gregson," exclaimed Tim and his companion, in the most encouraging tone.—  
"Don't care nothing for old Jenkins, doey? if they turn you out we'll find you another house."

"Oh! they've been at me already," responded Gregson with a very mysterious air.  
'My answer's short.—Am I woter, or am I not?—If a woter I be, I suppose I may do what I like with my wote.'—'And I suppose we may do what we like with our beards,' says Jenkins.—'Oh!' says I, 'if it comes to that,



Mr. Bohun ay'nt the gentleman what will see a man wronged for supporting him."

"You be hanged for a barber. What's Bohun to you?" said a Whig mobocrat.

"Cut him over," cried out the mob. "He's a Grey-beard.—Bohun for ever.—Cut him over—Smash him."

"Your boy has just as much chance as puss in a snare," replied the Whig Cleon.

"The one you poached last night, eh! Master Thorpe?" hallooed out another voice. There was a general laugh at Thorpe, who however was a practised bully, and soon rallied.

"Well I am sorry for your young gentleman," said Thorpe, — "for he don't want pluck."

"No! — he don't want no pluck," said

another Whig — a cautious man, who feeling himself in the minority, deprecated hostilities.

“ I know who does,” said Tim.

“ Do you mean me ? ” — said bully Thorpe.

“ What if I do ? ” said Tim.

“ You’ll see ! ” said Thorpe.

“ So I do now,” said Tim.

“ So you shan’t long,” said Thorpe, “ for I’ll bung up your spectacles.”

“ Two can play at that,” said Tim.

“ A ring — a ring ! ” halloed the crowd.  
“ Bohun for ever. Three groans for Earl Grey. — No Prigmore ! — Three cheers for Bohun. — Three groans for Prigmore. — No Whigs. — Vavasour for ever. — There’s a Tory ! — The Tories are better than the Whigs — No, they ay’nt. — Yes they are ! — They are most

honest.—No Whigs,—no taxes,—no Prigmore,  
—no nothing. Bohun for ever.—He's a Tory.  
—You be d—d.—He ay'nt.—Why does Squire  
Molesworth support him?—He don't.—Yes  
he do.—You lie.—So do you.—Say that twice.  
—What then?—You'll see.—So I do now.—  
A ring—a ring!—No fight.—No go.—Hallo!  
who's this?"

For at this moment, proceeding at a very rapid pace, though somewhat impeded by the multitude, which every moment became denser, a post-chariot-and-four dashed up to the Rose Hotel. A most supreme valet lolled on the box, and seemed conscious that the mob had assembled to gaze upon him. The orange favours announced Sir George Vavasour, and soon the smiling face of the courteous Baronet was seen smirking and bowing from the

window. At his last appearance, Sir George Vavasour had been very roughly treated by his intended constituents; for they were then full of gratitude to Lord Grey; but the enlightening eloquence of Mr. Bohun had already worked marvels. Scarcely one hoot was heard; the corporation candidate was received with calm indifference. Sir George a very sanguine man, was delighted with the "re-action," and already began to flatter himself that he might again sit as M.P. for Fanchester.

Past three o'clock: the afternoon coach arrived, and stopped at the Griffin, the inn opposite to the Rose. A tall, thin, young man, very plainly dressed, with a remarkably acid expression of visage, sharp nose, and sallow complexion, jumped out and hurried into the inn. Soon a murmur was heard,

which every moment increased, and at length burst into a shout which rent the skies.

“Prigmore!—Prigmore!”

“Is he here?”

“Surely! He came by the coach,” said Tim the Radical, with a smile of derision.

“Outside,” added his companion, with a sneer.

“What do you think of your man now Master Thorpe?” enquired Mr. Tim.

Even Thorpe could not answer. It was some time before he could recover the blow of supporting a candidate who travelled by a public conveyance.

“Oh, he’ll get a place soon, Master Thorpe, and then he can keep his carriage,” said Tim.

“And you can be coachman Master Thorpe,”

said his companion, "and then you'll have a place too."

Thorpe moved away to head the Whig mob, which began to assemble beneath the windows of the Griffin.

"Prigmore for ever!" exclaimed their leader.

"Three cheers! again, again, again! one cheer more! Prigmore for ever. He's the man."

But the cheering was very faint indeed.

"Bohun for ever!" cried out a voice.

"Bohun for ever!" responded ten thousand.

"Nine times more. Again! again! again! Again! again! again! Nine cheers more! We will have him."

At this moment Mr. Bohun's band of music with colors flying, one glorious standard touching almost the opposite houses with its flowing drapery passed in martial pomp down the High Street. The cheering was enthusiastic,

and amid all this excitement, the High Street crowded, the windows of the houses filled with anxious spectators, and dressed out in the opposite colors, Sir George Vavasour smiling and bowing at the parlour window of the Rose, and Mr. Prigmore still invisible, Aubrey Bohun and his train cantered up to the Rose Hotel.

There was a shout that rent the skies.

“ God bless him,” said the men.

“ God bless his curly locks,” said the women. “ We will have him, we must have him. Bohun for ever.”

“ I’ll never kiss the lips that don’t shout Bohun,” cried out a beautiful bold girl, the leader of those unhappy victims of our virtue, who in moments of popular excitement generally distinguish themselves, and it is curious are then only treated with consideration.

“Bravo Kitty!” exclaimed a thousand voices.

“Here goes, Bohun for ever!” shouted a young man. “Mr. Bohun, I promise you my vote and they may turn me out if they like. I don’t care.”

“Well done Ned Hathaway,” said Kitty. “I’ll send you a favor for that.”

“I thank you my friend,” said Mr. Bohun as he shook hands with his new supporter, “but I would sooner lose my election than injure one honest man.”

“Bravo,” shouted the mob.

“That’s noble!” exclaimed one.

“I’d get up in the night to serve him,” shouted another.

“He’s the man!” said a third.

“We will have him,” was the universal exclamation.



Aubrey had now reached the portico of the Rose, and was about to dismount. The mob were ranged in rows to shake his hand. The women were even more unreasonable. But Aubrey Bohun had the art of never appearing in a ridiculous position. Without the least bustle he seemed to shake hands with a thousand at once, and taking up one very pretty little girl in his arms made her the representative of her sex, and pressing on her lips one graceful embrace, escaped into the Hotel, amid the enthusiastic cheers of an immense multitude, hundreds of whom at that moment would literally have sacrificed their lives in his service with delight.

“Gentlemen excuse me,” said Mr. Bohun, as he entered his crowded committee-room, and threw himself upon a sofa, “Gainsborough

my dear fellow, this is harder work than the Morea. For God's sake get me something to eat. The quantities of ale and brandy water that I have poured down this unhappy throat to-day have given me a most unnatural appetite."

Away bustled George Gainsborough, and in a few minutes Mr. Bohun was refreshing himself with a cold pasty.

"This is existence!" he exclaimed, "why don't you eat Gainsborough? After all there is nothing like physical gratification."

"You will speak of course Mr. Bohun?" said his chairman.

"Of course, but let my tongue do other duty for a short time, my dear Scroggin. Besides I should like to hear Prigmore, I long to answer him."

“Gentlemen, Mr. Prigmore is going to speak,” shouted the entering waiter.

“Io triumphe!” exclaimed Aubrey Bohun, “Now comes the tug of war. Waiter bring me a potatoe if you have such a thing. Gainsborough my dear fellow just reconnoitre a moment.”

Away again bustled George Gainsborough, and shortly returned.

“Don’t hurry yourself Bohun. Prigmore has not yet made his appearance.”

“Perhaps the cock will not fight,” said Mr. Scroggin, “I should not wonder.”

“He must,” said George Gainsborough. “Besides several of his supporters are on the portico of the Griffin.”

A faint cheer was heard, and then a loud mixed shouting which seemed to increase in violence every instant.

“Gentlemen!” shouted an entering waiter,  
“Mr. Prigmore is out.”

Up jumped Mr. Bohun, and followed by Col. Neville, George Gainsborough, Mr. Scroggin, and several other of his supporters, ran up stairs, and unnoticed by the mob observed the scene.

There was Mr. Prigmore with his hat off looking like patience on a monument, though not smiling. Every time he attempted to address the multitude, the lulling uproar burst forth with renewed clamor.

“Gentlemen!” said Mr. Prigmore.

“Well, you’ve said that before,” said one of his auditors.

“No stranger,” shouted another.

“No treasury nominee.”

“Resident Representatives!”

“ No Whigs !”

“ Bohun for ever, Hurra !”

“ Bohun and Independence !”

“ Gentlemen,” repeated Mr. Prigmore.

“ Don’t look down in the mouth. Bohun won’t eat you.”

“ Prigmore and Reform !” halloed Thorpe in a stentorian voice.

“ Hurra ! Prigmore and Reform,” echoed Thorpe’s satellites.

Now arose a hissing and hooting, which exceeded any thing that had yet occurred, mingled with shouts of Bohun for ever.

“ Oh ! you ugly fellow !” shouted the Amazonian Kitty. “ You a member of Parliament ! why you ayn’t a man !”

“ Go it Kitty, go it Kitty. Give it him !”

“ Gentlemen,” said Mr. Prigmore. “ Fair

play is the characteristic of (terrible hooting) Englishmen," shouted Mr. Prigmore at the height of his voice.

"That's noble," shouted Master Thorp.  
"That's noble, Prigmore and fair play!"

"Hear him, hear him!" exclaimed many even of the Bohunites.

"We don't want him," responded others.

"We won't have him. We won't have him at no price. We don't want nothing of him."

"Go back to town."

"Book him an inside place!"

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Prigmore, and he put on his hat, and affected to retire.

"Don't let him retire," said Mr. Bohun. Speak to the people Scroggin. Get him a earring."

Mr. Scroggin jumped out on the portico of

the Rose, and was received with a loud cheer. Scroggin loved to make a speech. There was comparative silence.

“ Fellow townsmen,” said Mr. Scroggin.

“ It is the wish of Mr. Bohun that every one should have fair play.”

“ That’s noble !” exclaimed the Bohunites.

“ That’s noble !” echoed Master Thorp.

Mr. Prigmore still continued standing with his hat on. In about five minutes there was a lull. Mr. Prigmore took his hat off. The clamor re-commenced but more feeble.

“ Hush ! hush !” said many of the leading Bohunites. “ Hear him, hear him !”

And at length they did hear him. Mr. Prigmore was an acute, cold, fluent man. The Fanchester people thought him a great orator till they heard Mr. Bohun, because he was

never at a loss for words, and spoke with authority on subjects which they did not comprehend. Mr. Prigmore was a barrister by calling; but the profession only masked the political adventurer. He commenced life as an extreme Radical, and wrote articles against Lords and Ladies in the Westminster Review. When the Whigs juggled themselves into office, Mr. Prigmore left off abusing the Aristocracy, and only anathematised the Tories. His political economy, and his brazen assurance had quite humbugged the Whigs, who are themselves the most ignorant people in the world of all those who presume to be statesmen. Prigmore got a commissionership in one of the numerous Whig jobs, wrote a pamphlet against Corporations dedicated to Lord Durham, whom he described in the dedication as the hope of the



country, and in return was sent down by Mr. Ellice as the Government candidate for Fanchester with a special letter to the eminent low Whig manufacturer, Mr. Jenkins.

Mr. Prigmore amid occasional interruptions made a speech of three quarters of an hour length full of the usual common-places of the click. Gratitude to Lord Grey, who had given the people "Reform," was the burthen of the song. The separate stanzas consisted of abuse of the Tories, praise of the Whigs, panegyrics of the great things they had done, promises of the great things they would do. Vague generalities about retrenchment, reform, reduction of expenditure, reduction of taxation, were mixed up with some attacks in details on the Corn Laws, corrupt corporations, and parson magistrates.

Now and then Thorpe raised a faint cheer, but the people listened with indifference and impatience. Mr. Jenkins who stood by the side of Mr. Prigmore, looked gloomy but firm. At length Mr. Prigmore put on his hat, and this was the only moment of dead silence which had occurred during the day.

At this moment Mr. Bohun, who was a perfect master of stage effect, stepped out on the portico of the Rose. An acclamation rent the skies. Individual exclamations were lost in the universal cheer. Nothing was seen but the waving of hats and handkerchiefs and flags, and Mr. Bohun's band of course immediately struck up "See the conquering hero!"

This was an opportunity Mr. Bohun had

long courted. He had made so many speeches during the few days he had been a Candidate for Fanchester, that he really began to find some difficulty in discovering novel topics to vary his discourses. He longed to have an opponent to reply to, and now he had found one. Unhappy Prigmore, never was a man so scarified ! It was quite evident that the speaker was himself in a state of almost ecstatic enjoyment. He seemed himself almost intoxicated with his inexhaustible sarcasm. His teeming fancy fired with the maddening shouts of the populace. There is nothing like a good thundering cheer to prompt a man's imagination. Unhappy Prigmore ! His friends before Mr. Bohun's appearance had quite piqued themselves on his acid acuteness. Even after Mr. Bohun's first impassioned orations, they

.

consoled themselves by the conviction that his "flowery verbosity" must shrink before the Prigmore powers of ridicule. But alas! what was their disappointment and mortification when they found their desolate champion with a face like an unhealthy lemon exposed to the reckless laughter of the mob. Mr. Jenkins affected to treat Mr. Bohun as rude and personal, and recommended Mr. Prigmore to withdraw into the Hotel. They did withdraw, but amid the jeers of all present.

"What you've had enough of it," said one.

"What, your cock won't fight, eh! Jenkins?" exclaimed another.

"Send him back to town," said a third.

"Book him an inside place," said a fourth.

“ Oh ! you snivelling wretch,” said Kitty.

Amid a loud shout of “ Bohun for ever,” the popular candidate continued, and growing more earnest and impassioned, after the retreat of his discomfited rival, he wound up with a peroration whose elaborate gorgeousness made George Gainsborough tremble for its success. But the fact is no people relish eloquence of the highest order so much as the lowest mob. They understand or seem to understand everything. Allusion to History which they have never read, metaphorical expressions drawn from sources of which they have no experience—with all they sympathise.

“ There’s no one like him,” said Tim to his brother mechanic. “ Did’st ever hear such language ?”

“ I love his similies,” responded his companion. “ They is so purty !”

Mr. Bohun made his bow, and retired, and there arose a round of cheering which would not have disgraced a triumphant navy.

“ No Prigmore, no Jenkins !” said one of the lesser agitators.

“ Drive him out of the town,” said another.

And accordingly the mob made a rush at the Griffin, but the door was stoutly barricadoed. The Whigs made a good resistance, and the mob only broke the windows. Perhaps the arrival at this moment of Mr. Bohun’s britchka from the Castle, occasioned a diversion favourable to Mr. Prigmore’s safety. The mob instantly turned to the equipage, and as Mr. Bohun, Colonel Neville, and

Mr. George Gainsborough jumped in, took out the horses, and followed by the whole town dragged the candidate in triumph to the ancient seat of his fathers!

## CHAPTER III.

### A SECRET INTERVIEW BETWEEN TWO VERY GREAT MEN.

ABOUT ten o'clock of the same evening that Mr. Bohun demolished the Treasury nominee, Mr. Chumfield the jolly Tory brewer, and Mayor of Fanchester, quietly opened his street-door, and perceiving that no one was observing him, he made his way down one of the most obscure back streets, and so, after much winding and dodging, he finally, like the



fountain of Arethusa, which sank in Greece to rise again in Sicily, re-appeared at the top of the very High Street, at the bottom of which his own house was situate. Here, giving one or two cautious glances around, he went up to the door of a great brick house with five windows in front, and knocked very softly. The door was opened by a comely dame of a certain age.

“Is your master gone to-bed?” enquired Mr. Chumfield.

“Lawk! your worship, who can think of going to bed in these timbersome times!” responded the housekeeper of Mr. Alderman Baggs, “when we may wake in the morning and not find a single pane of glass to see through.”

“Nay, good Mistress Dolly, said the jocose

Chumfield, "you are not a Whig, and so you need not be afeared."

"Whigs and Tories! Mr. Mayor—I am sure I do not know what your worship means; but I think it very hard that a quiet body cannot go to bed, moreover when she is used to regular hours. It's not decorous or decent in the magistracy, I am thinking, not to have special constables to guard the aldermans' houses."

"And housekeepers too, eh Mrs. Dolly?"

"And why not Mr. Mayor?"

"Nay, I think you have the better right of the two," said Mr. Chumfield, "for you are a woman, and a very handsome one."

"Well I am sure Mr. Mayor, I wish that all the worshipful Court had as stout hearts as your worship has; but I am sorry to say

that when there's any thing of a mob my poor master is in a manner just nothing but an old scare-crow. He do detest mobs, that he do ; and truth to speak, they are very timbersome things."

"Well, my good mistress, it is not mob-law yet ; so go please you to Mr. Baggs, and tell him I would speak with him. Nay I'll wait here, for he is not used to be called on late."

Mr. Baggs was an old bachelor, and the senior alderman of the Corporation. He had retired from business with a large fortune, and lived in what was called a very handsome manner. Moreover having no relations, people wondered what he would do with his money, and some thought he would build a hospital. Had it not been for the Reform Bill, he would

certainly have repaired the town-hall, and as it was, he had presented the church with a new clock. He was looked upon as having what is called a very long head, and some said that had he not been a Tory, he might have had a chance of being M.P. for the town himself; but others laughed at this, and said that even Chumfield and his own party would join Jenkins, and vote against him, so jealous were all these High Street oligarchs of each other. However, there was no fear of this catastrophe—for Mr. Baggs was the most timid, cautious personage in the world, without a spark of ambition out of the High Street. There all his genius was concentrated:—there he was really a great man:—in the House of Commons he felt that he should only be a little one. Mr. Baggs's wealth entitled him to the

leadership of the Corporation party ; — but Baggs was quite a man of the Cabinet. He detested public assemblies and active pursuits. He could not make a speech, though he was more famous in close council than any of his brethren. He worked therefore with Chumfield, who was a fearless orator, had a high opinion of his judgment, and who paid him the greatest deference.

In a few moments Mrs. Dolly came forth from the parlour, and begged his worship to enter. The mayor found his friend Mr. Baggs sitting over the fire in a meditative position, stirring with moody touch a glass of very weak brandy and water. Chumfield was going to speak, but Baggs put his finger to his mouth, and begging Mrs. Dolly to bring some fresh glasses, hot water, and sugar, and open the

spirit chest, Mr. Baggs begged his friend to be seated.

“We cannot be too cautious in these times Chumfield,” said his host as Dolly departed. “I have a high opinion of Dolly; but she is a woman.”

“She is,” said the jolly Chumfield, “and has been a remarkably handsome one. I commend your taste neighbour Baggs.”

But Mr. Baggs was in no humour for a joke: he shook his head, and glancing suspiciously round the room, drew his chair still nearer to the mayor. Chumfield was mixing his tumbler of brandy and water; as the sugar melted, he looked up, and caught the countenance of Baggs, charged with mysterious meaning.

“I am glad you have come to-night,

Chumfield," said he. "These are strange times. Dolly tells me there is a great dinner at Jenkins'."

"Likely enough neighbour, and I am sure however scanty the repast, to-day has given them plenty to digest."

"I was thinking of the same thing," responded Baggs, in a very low voice. "I don't know what to make of all this. Neighbour Chumfield, these are strange times. I don't see my way."

"'Tis a crooked lane," replied the mayor, "but if we do't stick in the mud, we may come to the end of it."

"Only to think what times we live in," said Mr. Baggs. "Why they care no more for the corporation than they do for a set of old-clothes-men. W hy what do you think ? —

there was a boy in the street yesterday, as I was passing along, and he halloed out ‘there goes a humbug of an Alderman.’ It shows the spirit of the times.”

“Yes, we are certainly at a discount,” replied the jolly brewer with a smile, “but things will mend Mr. Baggs—things will look up yet.”

“I don’t know what to say to it, my good Sir, I don’t know what to say to it. Reform—open elections—When I wake in the morning I can’t believe it. Aldermen laughed at by little boys in the street. I almost wish we had conceded a little now Chumfield. I wish we had made Jenkins an Alderman.”

“Jenkins has it not all his own way yet,” said the jolly brewer.

“You think he has’nt?” said Mr. Baggs,



somewhat quickly. "Well, it does my heart good to hear it. I am sure, if we could only keep down that fellow Jenkins, I scarcely care who were in power. We have had our day Chumfield. I am content—that is, I should be content if Jenkins only could be baffled. What says Sir George?"

"Havn't you seen him?"

"Oh! dear me, no. I have not stirred out to-day. I know nothing that has happened, except what Dolly told me, and she generally knows all. Frightful times these—frightful! frightful! I can't bear to hear of broken windows, it always makes my blood turn cold."

"But they were not our windows," said Chumfield. "It's Jenkins that the mob are at."

"So Dolly tells me," replied Mr. Baggs

with a quick tone and sparkling eye, "but I can't believe it."

"It's true enough though; and what's more, they are all obliged to dine in the back parlour."

"Well, we live in strange times! Jenkins pelted!"

"Tremendously!"

"And his windows broken!"

"Every one of them!"

"There's a good spirit in the place, if it could only be directed," said Mr. Baggs musingly.

"That's the very thing I come about," said Chumfield. "If we only look about ourselves we may gain the day yet."

"Ah! the Tories," said Mr. Baggs despondingly. "It's all over with us. A Tory won't go down now."

“Anything better than a Whig,” said Chumfield.

“Mr. Bohun is a gentleman,” said Mr. Baggs,—“but then Sir George?”

“Has no sort of chance,” said Chumfield.

“We must stick to our colours,” said Baggs.

“But if we have no ship of our own, we must turn privateers,” said Chumfield, who loved a nautical metaphor, “and fight under the flag of another state.”

“I don’t see my way,” said Baggs. “I would sooner vote for Bohun than Prigmore.”

“Bohun is an opposition candidate,” said Chumfield, “and we are the opposition party.”

“That’s very true,” said Baggs, “but then Sir George?”

“Is a man of sense,” said Chumfield. “If

we can only beat Jenkins now, we may bring in the Baronet another time."

"I wish he was of our opinion," said Baggs.

"He is," said Chumfield. "He dined with me to-day; and if we will support Bohun, he'll resign."

"Anything to keep down that fellow Jenkins," said Baggs. "The airs his family give themselves are quite disgusting. Dolly says they never notice her now."

"We can beat him," said Chumfield.

"He is very strong," replied Baggs. "I wish Mr. Bohun had started earlier."

"We can give him one hundred and fifty votes," said Chumfield.

"It goes against my heart to call those ten pounds votes," said Baggs.

"The Reform Act is the law of the land now," said Chumfield.

"It is indeed," agreed Baggs despondingly. "It will make the fortune of Jenkins. If he brings in Prigmore, all his sons will have places."

"I should'nt wonder," said Chumfield.

"We shan't be able to hold up our heads," said Baggs.

"Not a man John of us," agreed Chumfield.

"I wish I could see Sir George," said Mr. Baggs. "I have voted for him these five and thirty years."

"Will you step on to the Rose?" said Chumfield.

"I dread the night air," said Baggs." Dolly will tell you I have not been out after sunset for these thirty years."

“ But think of Jenkins,” said Chumfield. “ If we could only coalesce with the Bohun party, it will seem as if we return our own member.”

“ I wish I could see my way,” said Baggs.

“ It is as clear as a pike staff,” said Chumfield, and he took out his pocket book. “ Here is the registration—nine hundred votes, and Jenkins pretends that he has five hundred promises ; but promises you know are like pie-crust. Depend upon it there’s a re-action. Now do come and speak a word to Sir George. I’ll settle it with Dolly.”

“ Well I don’t know,” said Mr. Baggs, “ well wrapped up, with a silk handkerchief over my mouth, I don’t think I could come to much harm.”

“ It is a very mild night,” said Chumfield, “ quite like summer.”

“No fog?” enquired Baggs.

“Not a breath,” said Chumfield. “Let me speak to Dolly.”

“Well my dear friend, anything for my King and country, and to keep down that fellow Jenkins. If we could but bring in Mr. Bohun, as you say, he would be in a manner the Corporation member. But they say he is a Radical?” added Mr. Baggs.

“Fiddle-de-dee, he has thirty thousand a year,” said Chumfield. “I am not afeard of such Radicals as those.”

“It will be a death-blow to Jenkins,” said Mr. Baggs. “I wish Bohun had canvassed earlier. I am afraid they have the start of us.”

“The race is never won till it is lost,” said Chumfield.

“ I should not like to move without we are sure,” said the cautious Alderman.

“ We are sure,” said the sanguine Mayor—  
“ Bohun is the winning horse, or my name is not Chumfield.”

“ It would be a death-blow to Jenkins,” said Baggs musingly.

“ He’s done—he’s diddled,” said Chumfield.  
“ He never would be able to hold up his head again. He was cock sure—he was indeed. It was a thousand to one in his favour. He has pledged himself to the Treasury to bring in Prigmore,—I know it, I know it as a fact. I know it from a friend in town; and then he will be Mayor next year, and go up to town and be knighted !”

“ You don’t say so !” said Baggs in a voice of terror. “ Speak to Dolly—I’ll go directly—



I'll see Sir George. " We can tell him we will bring him in next time—we can, can't we Chumfield? I'll ring the bell—I'll order my great coat, and I'll put a handkerchief round my mouth. I'll do any thing, any thing in the world to crush that fellow Jenkins."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PERPLEXITIES OF MR. GAINSBOROUGH SENIOR.

WHILE all these memorable transactions were occurring, there was not perhaps, of all the characters of our history, any one in a condition of more painful perplexity than Mr. Gainsborough senior. Long before Mr. Bohun's return to England, Mr. Gainsborough acting in pursuance of those liberal views which always

regulated his public conduct, and his vanity gratified by taking what he styled "a leading part," had pledged himself to Mr. Prigmore, and not only pledged himself, but had become even one of his committee. And now, here was his son the prime counsellor and bosom friend of Mr. Prigmore's opponent; and the whole neighbourhood, whose acquaintance he had been sedulously courting for the last seven years were, whatever they might pretend, doubtless not less deeply interested in Mr. Bohun's success. Mr. Gainsborough, as he declared fifty times every day, was "most awkwardly situated." The poor man was really half out of his mind. All night Mrs. Gainsborough, and all day Miss Gainsborough, poured upon him their reproaches and their supplications.

“My dear Mary, what am I to do,” in vain he endeavoured to reply.—“I am pledged, I am pledged to Mr. Prigmore. I am bound not only to vote for him, but to use all my influence in his favour. I am one of his committee, one of Mr. Prigmore’s committee.—Was ever any thing so unfortunate? No one can deny but that I am most awkwardly situated. What shall I do,—what can I do?—Vote for Mr. Prigmore I must. To please you, and to gratify George, I will take as little active part as possible. I will speak to Jenkins, I will speak to Mr. Prigmore—I will speak to them as a man of the world.—Jenkins is a man of the world himself—Mr. Prigmore is a man of the world—they are both men of the world: I will speak to them candidly and openly. I will tell them how I am situ-

ated, — how very awkwardly I am situated. Can I do more? my dear Mary, can I do more? Fanny is it possible for any man to do more? I am sure I admire Mr. Bohun as much as any one. I don't quite understand his politics, but no one can admire him more than I do. I am sure George may well be proud of such a friend. George always had talents in making friends. And now he has a most distinguished friend. It is impossible to say what Mr. Bohun will not do for him. If Mr. Bohun succeed, I must say I think it is all owing to George. He seems to me never to go to bed. I hope he won't knock himself up. I am sure I wish Mr. Bohun success. No one more sincerely. I am sure I hope he will succeed, though Jenkins says it is ridiculous, and that he has no chance."

“How can he have a chance?” said Mrs. Gainsborough reproachfully, “when his friends, his particular friends vote against him.”

“My dear Mary!” said Mr. Gainsborough, entreatingly.

“I know nothing about politics,” said Miss Gainsborough: “But all I know Papa, for our family not to support Mr. Bohun with all their influence, seems to me to say the least, quite unnatural.”

“Was there ever such a girl!” exclaimed the despairing father. “Well I am sure I don’t know how it will end. I wish their committees would compare notes, and that the weakest would resign. I am very ready to be arbitrator, and as I have promised Mr. Prigmore to vote for him, and really wish Mr. Bohun to succeed, I think I am just the per-

son to be a very impartial umpire. I'll speak to Jenkins."

"What is the use of speaking to Jenkins, if he persists in saying Mr. Bohun has no chance," said Mrs. Gainsborough.

"Jenkins, indeed!" said Miss Gainsborough, "what is Jenkins to us—Jenkins! what a name. I am sure I should never think of keeping a promise to a man named Jenkins."

"My dear wife—my own Fanny—do be calm. Consider, do consider, consider how awkwardly I am situated."

At this moment the servant entered the room with a despatch from the committee-room at Fanchester. Thus it ran :

## GLORIOUS NEWS!!

Rose, 10 o'clock.

Dear Father,

Vavasour has withdrawn in our favour. The Tories coalesce with us heartily. Scroggin has resigned the chairmanship to Chumfield. We shall beat them—we shall beat them. You must vote for us. Bohun for ever! Huzza!

Your affectionate son,

G. G.

“Glorious!” exclaimed Mrs. Gainsborough.

“I shall die with joy,” said Miss Gainsborough.

“I wish Prigmore was at the devil,” said Mr. Gainsborough. “I am certainly most awkwardly situated. I think I will ride over to Hartlebury and talk it over with Mr. Molesworth.”

“Do my love,” said Mrs. Gainsborough.



“Do, dearest papa,” said Miss Gainsborough.

“Mr. Molesworth is a most sensible man,” added Mrs. Gainsborough.

“And Miss Molesworth a most charming girl,” said Miss Gainsborough. “And they are both for Mr. Bohun. You cannot refuse anything to Miss Molesworth papa. You know every body says there is a regular flirtation between you.”

Mr. Gainsborough gave a smile of complacent perplexity, and half sighing, rang the bell and ordered his horse.

When Mr. Gainsborough arrived at Hartlebury, he found a large party assembled. There was Mrs. Escott, and Mrs. Neville, and several other young ladies from Fanchester, all assisting Miss Molesworth in making green

favours. Mr. Molesworth was reading the newspaper.

“Well Mr. Gainsborough,” said Mrs. Escott, “I see you have come with the good news, Mr. Bohun turned Tory, always thought he was one, but I was too brisk for you. Only think of Mr. Bohun making his first speech from my balcony. Very handsome of him was’nt it? I call it the Bohun balcony now. You can’t think what a favourite I am with the people. They are so grateful for my early support of their favourite. He had not so many friends then as he has now. Early friends are valued. The Escotts were always early in the field, quite our family motto. And the people, poor things, are so grateful for it, they gave me such a cheer as the carriage passed. Very handsome of them, was’nt it?”

“I am making this favour for you Mr. Gainsborough,” said Helen. “You must wear it for my sake.”

“For your sake,” said the guarded Gainsborough with a courteous smile, “I am too proud to wear anything; I am sure Mr. Bohun has no sincerer well-wisher than myself, but you know my dear Miss Molesworth, how awkwardly I am situated.”

“Oh! nonsense,” said Mrs. Neville in a very peremptory tone: “You must vote for Aubrey, and there is an end of the affair. I never intend to speak to any person again who does not vote for Aubrey.”

“But my dear Mrs. Neville,” piteously poured forth Mr. Gainsborough, “consider, do consider, consider how very awkwardly I am situated.”

“ I make it a rule never to consider,” replied Mrs. Neville, “ I hate considerate people.”

“ What am I to do, my dear Sir?” said Mr. Gainsborough to Mr. Molesworth, taking him aside by the button, “ never was a man so awkwardly situated.”

“ You deserve it neighbour, you deserve it for ever having anything to do with the Whigs. I always told you, you would live to repent it.”

“ So you did,” said the unhappy Gainsborough, “ but surely Mr. Bohun’s politics are not such as Mr. Molesworth would approve of.”

“ Oh ! as for me, I have no vote, so it does not signify. If I had, I should have asked Sir

George Vavasour to stand as a personal favour to myself, merely for the purpose of giving him my solitary suffrage."

"Well do you know my dear Sir," replied Mr. Gainsborough, "that considering all things you may thank your stars that Hartlebury is not in the boundaries, for I cannot help thinking," and here he glanced at Helen, "I cannot help thinking, that, taking every thing into consideration, you would, like myself, have been very awkwardly situated."

"Well! I do not care how it ends," said Mr. Molesworth: "For my part I wish Sir George had stood. I hate compromise, I hate coalition, I hate concession of all kinds, but still I confess it is some consolation that they pelted Prigmore."

A loud ringing at the Hall bell, the door dashed open, and Mr. Bohun entered and alone.

“My colours, delightful sight,” he gaily exclaimed, as he almost seized one from Miss Molesworth’s hands, and pressed it to his lips. “How do you, how are you all? Emmeline we have scarcely seen each other of late. You must come and canvass for me. A pretty woman you know,” said he turning to Miss Molesworth, “especially on horseback, is worth more than a whole committee. Ah! my dear Mrs. Escott, my first, my best friend, and Mr. Gainsborough too, what should I do without your son. Allow me to express my gratitude to his father.”

“Mr. Bohun,” said Mr. Gainsborough, as he shook the extended hand, “I can assure

you that even George cannot be a sincerer well-wisher to you than his father. I wish I could say more. Unhappily I cannot, but I am sure you will pardon me. You know, my dear Sir, how very awkwardly I am situated."

"My good Sir, not a word. Whatever you do I shall ever consider myself your debtor."

"Well! that's very handsome," said Mrs. Escott, "ayn't it? More than I should say. And for my part I agree with Mrs. Gainsborough and your daughter, and your whole family, and all your circle of friends, that if you do not vote for Mr. Bohun it will be the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of."

Unhappy Mr. Gainsborough! This was riding over to Hartlebury for advice!

“Well how do you get on?” said Mr. Molesworth to Mr. Bohun, “if it be possible to get a word of truth out of a candidate.”

“Why, to speak sheer truth,” said Mr. Bohun, “they have the best of it; but considering that three days ago I had not a chance, I hope in three days more that the odds will change.”

“I have escaped here for half an hour’s relaxation,” he continued in an under tone, to Miss Molesworth, “and with, I confess it with fear and trembling, a lurking hope that I might induce you to do me a great favour.”

“Indeed! And what may it be?”



“ I am summoning up courage to ask it,” said Mr. Bohun, looking round as if he could scarcely venture to make the request before so many auditors.

“ Come gentles all,” said Helen : “ luncheon has been long ready. Mrs. Escott you must need refreshment after all the excitement of your cheers.

Mr. Molesworth offered his arm to Mrs. Neville, and Helen found hers almost unconsciously in Bohun’s. As they walked along to the dining-room he said : “ There is only one thing can gain the day.”

“ What ? ” said Helen somewhat eagerly.

“ You and Emmeline must canvass for me.”

“ Papa ! ” said Helen shaking her head.

“ I know the difficulty,” replied Bohun,

but the Tories now openly and avowedly support me. This will render it less annoying to him. But all that I can urge, your quick mind has already perceived. Dearest Miss Molesworth, do not deny me this great, this essential service, this paramount gratification."

"Nay! ask it as a service."

"I do, I do indeed."

"We must see."

"I know you can do anything. Do you think that I have no perceptions? I had not been four-and-twenty hours in your society, before I discovered that you were one of those persons whose influence no individual could resist."

"Nay! you are in your heroics! This is not the Portico of the Rose."

Mr. Bohun had too much tact not to join in the laugh, and thus they entered the dining-room.

## CHAPTER V.

THE LADIES CANVASS. PARLIAMENT IS  
DISSOLVED. NOMINATION DAY.

THE next day Mrs. Neville and Miss Molesworth in green riding habits cantered into Fanchester, and canvassed for Mr. Bohun. They were accompanied only by their grooms, for any male companions would have marred the effect of their mission, and they had secret instructions as to the individuals whom they should endeavour to influence.

“ I am sure you cannot refuse me Mr. Spring,” said Miss Molesworth to an obdurate butcher.

“ We do not ask you to vote for us,” said Mrs. Neville, “ only not to vote against us.”

“ The long and the short is ladies, I won’t say nothing,” was Mr. Spring’s surly reply.

“ Well I am sure,” said Mrs. Neville, “ this is the rudest reception we have met with in all Fanchester.”

Mr. Spring whistled.

“ And everybody told us Mr. Spring,” said Miss Molesworth, “ that you were such a particularly polite person to the ladies.”

Encore whistling.

"Mrs. Neville nodded to Miss Molesworth, as much as to say, there was no use in remaining. Miss Molesworth made a last desperate effort.

"You positively refuse me Mr. Spring?"

"Positively Miss," was the Spartan answer, and the ladies retired.

"I hope we shall have better fortune at this house," said Helen: "Walter, Thomas Walter, that's our man; owes money to Jenkins—wife for us now for an ingratiating smile."

"Well Mr. Walter, we have come to pay you a visit."

"I dare say you have Miss."

"What a very pretty child!" exclaimed Mrs. Neville.

"*Two* very pretty children!" exclaimed

Miss Molesworth, "Is Mrs. Walter at home?"

"Yes, but can't see her."

"Are you sure we can't see her?"

"Quite sure," said Mr. Walter composedly.

"Will you give her a message from me?" said Miss Molesworth.

"Certainly Miss."

"Tell her then to use her influence with you to vote for Mr. Bohun."

"I can't say nothing about voting, Ma'am."

"Mr. Bohun is a neighbour," said Mrs. Neville.

"We ayn't seen much of him," responded Walter.

"But now he has come to live amongst you," replied Mrs. Neville.

"I hope he is Ma'am."

“ Residence is surely a strong claim,” said Miss Molesworth.

“ Very true,” said Walter.

“ Mr. Prigmore does not reside here,” said Mrs. Neville.

“ No, nor any where else as ever I could learn,” says Walter. “ I am sure for my part I wish we had never had anything to do with this here Reform.”

“ Well that’s exactly what we think ourselves, Miss Molesworth and I,” said Mrs. Neville eagerly. “ We are both of us against Reform, and therefore I hope you will support Mr. Bohun.”

“ I thought Mr. Bohun was for doing still more?” said Walter.

“ Only to make everything quite right,” said Mrs. Neville, “ and to make you quite comfortable again Mr. Walter.”



“ I ayn’t no objections to the gentleman myself,” observed Walter more promisingly, “ none whatsoever, I think he is as fit to be Member of Parliament as any one. I said so to Mrs. Walter last night. I knows nothing against him, not I. But Mr. Jenkins is for Mr. Prigmore.”

“ And what is Mr. Jenkins to you ?” said Mrs. Neville.

“ Oh ! nothing !” said Mr. Walter who being a secret debtor was very proud of his open independence. “ Mr. Jenkins is nothing to me, my vote’s my own, but still—”

He hesitated and turned away.

“ Well I am sure I would not vote against my conscience to please Mr. Jenkins,” said Mrs. Neville.

“ Nor I either,” shrieked out a shrill voice,

and Mrs. Walter came forward from the back shop. "I said the very same thing last night. He is for Bohun in his heart as much as any one. Come speak out now," continued the better half, "and pass your word to the ladies like a man."

Mrs. Neville attacked Mr. Walter. Miss Molesworth took Mrs. Walter aside.

"Let him speak to Mr. Chace," said Miss Molesworth. "He will set all right. Tell him that I am quite sure that all will be set right, now do, that's a dear good woman, because although we are sure to win, every vote tells you know."

"To be sure, that's what I was saying last night, come pass your word like a man Tom. His word's his bond. Be sure of that. Thomas Walter's word is his bond."

Thomas Walter between the supplicating Mrs. Neville, and the smiling Miss Molesworth was very much like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy. He could not resist. He gave his word, very like a man indeed; for he was persuaded to act against his interest by a woman.

So you see our fair missionaries got on very well indeed. Ay! they did wonderful execution amid the waverers who were really independent. And Timothy Clode the gigantic and humourous mealman who had never promised no one, never did, but who had been heard to declare that he thought Mr. Bohun too much of a dandy for his money, pledged his faith to Mr. Bohun's fair partizans.

The approaching contest for Fanchester made more sensation than all the other anti-

cipated struggles in the County together, but it was the general opinion that Prigmore's early start backed by Jenkins and the Sectarians must gain the day, though rumours were also daily about that the Bohun party gathered strength every hour. As for Mr. Bohun himself he seemed never out of his saddle, unless it was when he dismounted to lunch at Hartlebury.

“ Well all I can say is your man deserves to win it,” was the sarcastic observation of the Prigmorites, secretly piqued by the absence of their champion. Mr. Gainsborough still indulged the forlorn hope that one of the Candidates would resign.

At length Parliament was dissolved, the writ issued, treating stopped, the deck cleared for action, the hustings built and the trumpet sounded for the final struggle.

The first day was passed only in formalities, processions and speechifications. It was a fine early December morning. Mrs. Neville called early for the Molesworths, in order that they might enter the town before the crowd was too dense, and take up their position with comfort at the windows of Mr. Scroggin, and view the procession. The Latimers declined her invitation.

Jenkins and the Sectarians being alarmed for their heads and windows had sworn in a swarm of special constables who broke the heads of all the boys in the town under ten years of age. This they called keeping the peace. The High Street was crowded, but the road way-kept tolerably clear. The bells of all the churches rang. Every body was covered with party ribbons.

A grand burst of music announced that Mr. Bohun's principal band followed by a large body of electors were going out to meet him. They passed by with all the bravery of their standards, and their followers took off their hats and gave a lusty cheer as they passed the Hartlebury party. The cheer was re-echoed by the crowd, and the people in the distant parts thinking from the clamor that their hero had arrived made a simultaneous rush to the High Street. In a few minutes there was general confusion, and a regular row, and the special constables set to belabouring the heads of every unoffending individual who was either motionless or seemed unresisting.

"Don't you be so cocky Master Sparkes with that ere staff of yours," said one victim.

"I say Sparkes, bees you only a constable?"

Lord I thought as how you was the new Alderman."

"Come move on there, move on," said Sparkes authoritatively.

"My eye! move on!"

"Move on!" said a stern Radical. "Move on! A cat may look at a king mayn't he?"

"Silence," said Mr. Sparkes.

"Silence!" echoed the indignant Radical, "why you snivelling Jack in office you! If I don't call out Bohun for ever in your old corrupt ears, you old humbug! Bohun for ever! Huzza!"

And indeed he might well exclaim, for at this moment arose the sound of distant music, and soon the loud cheers of the people who lined the road for more than a mile out of the town came rushing on the wind.

A nice observer might have detected that Helen Molesworth's face turned pale. She had never yet heard Mr. Bohun speak, they had been placed accordingly just opposite the hustings.

"He is coming," said Mrs. Neville. "I am sure he is coming. Helen, dear Helen, Aubrey is coming."

The music became louder and louder, the advanced flags approached, and passed them. The cheering seemed to rend the skies. Bounding with matchless grace on an Arab steed and at the head of nearly a thousand of his tenantry and neighbours covered with boughs of laurel, Aubrey Bohun appeared. Had he been standing for all—shire he could scarcely have been followed by a more numerous cortége.



“ He doesn’t look like a radical,” said Mr. Molesworth with a smile.

Mr. Bohun passed their window, he reined in his ambling steed, uncovered and waving his hat cried “ Bohun for ever.” How many lusty voices responded to that cry! The long procession passed, the state carriage drawn by four roan steeds and the household followed. Down the High Street they proceeded, perambulated the great square, and then returning, and forming at the back of the Hustings, Mr. Bohun dismounted and appeared in their front amid a sea of waving arms and a storm of cheering. During the procession Mr. Prigmore attended by Mr. Jenkins and the click had contrived to take up his position on the Hustings unnoticed.

The town clerk read the writ, his worship

the jolly Chumfield came forward, and made a speech, and prayed a hearing for all parties.

“That’s fair Chumfield!” said a man in the mob.

“Bravo! Chumfield!”

“Bohun for ever!”

Then advanced Mr. Jenkins, a sharp, square-built, acute looking man, with a peculiarly unamiable expression of countenance, and somewhat bald. As he came forward there rose a yell which seemed interminable. Jenkins stood quite unmoved, and an expression of contempt and consciousness of power were evident in his countenance.

“Oh! you wretch!” said Kitty.

“You’ll give potatoes to the poor, will you?” said one.

“Jenkins,—how d’ye do?” shouted another.

“Jenkins, do’nt give up!”

“Jenkins, you’re a nice man!”

“I do’nt think!” added a fourth.

At length, the mob being conscious that the day could not last for ever, particularly in December, and that the only way to hear Mr. Bohun was to let matters go on as quietly as possible, Jenkins obtained an audience. He was not a bad mob speaker. He made some points which gave bully Thorpe an opportunity of cheering him, and he revenged some of the snubs and sneers which he had received without a requital during the last six weeks. He ended by proposing Mr. Prigmore amid renewed yells, and the proposition was seconded

by a gentleman who took off his hat, and made a bow.

Then came forward Mr. Prittle Prattle amid enthusiastic cheering, to propose Mr. Bohun. The worthy alderman, who had been hissed at all his life, seemed equally astonished and delighted with his new honors, and glanced at his old opponent Jenkins with triumph. When this proposition was seconded, Mr. Prigmore advanced; but the mob would not hear him, — and, after half an hour of fruitless endeavours, and broken sentences, Prigmore made way for Mr. Bohun. When the applause had died away you might hear a pin drop.

To-day Mr. Bohun was very anxious to make a very great impression. He was now an experienced orator. He brought into prac-

tice all the results of his observation. He took care never to make a hit, unless there was a dead silence, and always to end with a point. He spoke for two hours. Helen thought that she had never listened to any thing more interesting, or ever witnessed a more captivating spectacle.

The orator concluded—the business of the day was over. At nine o'clock next morning the polling was to commence. But no one in Fanchester thought of going to bed that night. Mr. Bohun immediately came over to Mr. Scroggin's, to speak to the Molesworths and Mrs. Neville; but he could not return to dine with them—he could not leave Fanchester—he must attend his committee. Their carriage was ordered. They agreed that they were not to return to Fanchester until all was over.

The business grew much too nervous. Mrs. Neville was to remain at Hartlebury till the election was terminated. Mr. Bohun promised them an hourly bulletin of the state of the poll.

He handed them to their carriage.

“Good bye, dear Emmeline,” he said to Mrs. Neville, “whether I win or lose, you have my thanks. And you dear Miss Molesworth, how can I ever repay you for all your kindness?”

“By winning! — by winning! — Mr. Bohun: I will dream of nothing but your triumph.”

“Dream of me, and I care not for the triumph.”

“Well, good morning to you,” said Mr. Molesworth. “That Prigmore is a shocking-

looking vagabond. Don't let him be a member of Parliament, for God's sake !”

The carriage drew off amid loud cheers, and Mr. Bohun repaired to the Rose.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A MIDNIGHT COLLOQUY.

It was midnight. Two of the Prigmorites met in the street.

“Well, any thing new?”

“I have been the rounds. The blunt’s going like the town-pump. I saw a man come out of Spring’s house, muffled up with a mask on. I thought I’d dodge him. Who should it be but young Chumfiel<sup>d</sup>! The devils work there, I fear”



“D——e, I’ll answer for Spring. You don’t mean that, do you?”

“Yes but I do. I never thought he was a true man.”

“Told Jenkins?”

“I could not see him, but I met young Frisby and told him.”

“Young Frisby!—I ayn’t no opinion of him!”

“I thought he was as right as the town-clock.”

“So I thought too. His dad owes Jenkins a thirty pound note, and Jenkins told him that there would be no odds about that if as how—who comes here?—The enemy.—Rufus Parsons and Swift. Keep close.”

“I’ll speak to them. Good night Parsons. Up rather late to-night?”

“ All fair election time. *You* ayn’t snoring, are you ?”

“ Well, I hope the best man will win.”

“ I am sure he will.

“ Don’t be too sure.”

“ I’ll bet you five pound we win.”

“ No ! I never bet.”

“ Well, I’ll bet you Parsons.”

“ What ? ”

“ Five pound that Bohun don’t win.”

“ No ! — you should have taken me before. Come, I’ll bet you he do’nt lose by twenty.”

“ Oh ! that’s a very different affair. You talked of equal betting.”

“ Well, I’ll bet you he is at the head of the poll to-morrow, at twelve.”

“ No ! — that’s humbug. — I’ll bet five

pounds that this day-week Prigmore is our member."

"We shall see," said Parsons.

"What, you won't bet, eh?"

"D——e, I've a good mind, now. —  
D——e, if I ayn't sure we shall beat you!"

"Come bet!"

"Well, d——e, I will. I'll bet you five pounds that Prigmore is not our member"

"Done!"

"Done!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FIRST DAY.

DAME Harrald stood at the gate of the alms-house surrounded by the petticoats of the village. All the men were at the 'Lecture.

“I wish I had a vote,” said Dame Harrald.

“The women have no votes,” said Mrs. Collins mournfully.

“The more's the shame,” said Gossip Faddle.

“ In this world the men have it all their own way,” remarked Dame Harrauld pensively.

“ If the men have the votes, the women have the influence, Squire Bohun says,” remarked the gossip.

“ And I am sure there’s not a woman that’s not on his side,” said Mrs. Collins.

“ Is it a match between the Squire and Miss Helen ?” enquired Gossip Faddle.

“ I am sure I hope it may be,” said Mrs. Collins, “ for they are just suiting I think.”

“ I have nursed her when she was in long petticoats,” said Dame Harrauld.

“ Only think how she has grown !” said Mrs. Collins.

“ Mr. Sideboard thinks it’s a match,” said Gossip Faddle.

“ If Mr. Sideboard says so,” said the Dame,

“there’s something in it. He’s a sensible man, John Sideboard. I remember him when he was just a foot-boy. His father was butler before him.”

“He didn’t not exactly say so,” remarked the gossip, “but he didn’t deny it when I axed him.”

“He couldn’t well say Yes,” observed Dame Harrald. “It wouldn’t be decorous.”

“Silence gives assent,” shrewdly observed Mrs. Collins.

“It will be a merry day on the green,” said Dame Harrald.

“An ox roasted alive, I am just thinking?” said the gossip.

“It was so when the Squire married himself,” said the Dame.

“Its clearly a natural match,” said the gossip, “for do not the estates join?”

“It seems a matter of providence, as our Squire has no son,” remarked Mrs. Collins.

“Well! I once thought of the Rector,” said Gossip Faddle. “God bless him!”

“If Squire Bohun had not returned, there’s no saying,” said Mrs. Collins.

“However it may be, I hope Miss Helen will be as happy as she deserves,” said the Dame.

“And that’s as happy as the day is long,” said the Gossip.

“There’s Jin Flag,” said Mrs. Collins, as she looked up the lane. A horseman was galloping across the green.

“He’s come from the ’Lection,” said the Dame.

“Good news I trow,” said the Gossip: “May be if we call him, he’ll just stop for a

chat. Jin Flag! Jin Flag, I say. He takes no notice of us. Its not very civil I am thinking. Many a time has he had his baccy box filled on trust, and never paid me for it."

"Was always a wild boy," said Dame Harrald, shaking her head.

"He'll turn out well at last, I hope," said Mrs. Collins.

"Is it a match between him and Lydia?" enquired the Gossip.

"Nay Mrs. Faddle, I wish you'd not put such things in young people's heads," said Mrs. Collins gravely.

"Well, I only axed?" said the Gossip.

"There's no end to axing," said Mrs. Collins.

The horseman covered with green ribbons dashed up to the gates, which flew open as he



approached. In a minute the hall bell rang loud and long.

And within the hall during the whole morning, Mrs. Neville and our heroine had been engaged in conversation not less earnest than Dame Harrauld and her friends.

“The hall bell!” exclaimed Miss Molesworth.

“The state of the Poll!” exclaimed Mrs. Neville.

“It really is too nervous an affair,” said Miss Molesworth.

“I can bear it no longer,” said Mrs. Neville, “I am sure Aubrey will lose.

“There can be nothing very decisive yet,” remarked Miss Molesworth. “It is only half past twelve.”

“I wonder if he will have one vote!” said

Mrs. Neville. "Sometimes I think he won't."

The drawing-room door opened and Mr. Sideboard entered, followed by Jin Flag.

"I am to see your honored Ladyships myself," said Jin Flag, with a reeling gait and a rolling eye.

"What news?" said Miss Molesworth.

"Have you the state of the poll?" enquired Mrs. Neville.

"I am to see your honored Ladyships myself," said Jin Flag. "The Squire told me so." looking round to Mr. Sideboard. "I have done the three miles in ten minutes," and he unbuttoned his waistcoat, and brought out a dirty silk handkerchief which he proceeded to unfold.

"Make haste," said Mrs. Neville.

“Yes your Ladyship,” said Jin Flag, and he handed to her with a bow the

## STATE OF THE POLL.

12 o'clock.

BOHUN . . . . . 73

PRIGMORE . . . . . 75

Bohun and Independence for ever!!!

“Well its quite a relief,” said Mrs. Neville. “No one can say he has not polled seventy-three votes.”

“And what do they say?” enquired Miss Molesworth eagerly.

“All’s right,” said Jin Flag with a knowing wink. “Don’t you be unasy Miss. The ’Squire is at the head of the poll by this time.

Old Jenkins ayn't got no heart at all. Looks for all the world just as if he was going to be hanged. I knows a trick or two you see. "Tayn't the first 'lection I've had a finger in the pie. That's why young Squire Gainsborough engaged me, d'ye see. Jin says he to me, you're used to these sort of things, meaning 'lections. I think I ought to know a trick or two, says I. I brought up twenty votes for Squire Ducie last county 'lection if I brought one. I knows how to set about it, that's the fact—its my way, d'ye see. I knows how to come over them. Well says he, you're engaged for Squire Bohun. Done, says I; you'll see what's what. My sister married Jenkins' head clerk—you twig, Miss? enemy's camp, ah? I knows how they feel. They wouldn't give a brass farthing for their chance. That's the

plain truth. They're dead beat and they know it. Prigmore will resign to-night, or I'm a Dutchman!"

Nothing like an election to make an impudent fellow of importance. Mrs. Neville and Miss Molesworth listened with eager hearts and credulous ears to all Jin Flag's revelations, they thought him almost as great a man as he pretended to be, they congratulated themselves on having such an auxiliary. They made him repeat a thousand times all his boasted secrets of the enemy's camp, they caught fresh courage from each fresh rhodomontade, they asked him his opinion, they exhorted him to fresh exertions. They exacted from him a promise to be their aid-de-camp during the whole contest, and constantly let them know the state of the poll, and all the secret information he obtained from

.

his fair relative who had so fortunately united her destinies with those of Jenkins' head-clerk.

Jin Flag became each instant more confident, more communicative, more authoritative. He promised them with a mysterious shake of his head, and a significant wink of the eye, to work night and day for Squire Bohun, to leave no stone unturned to secure his success ; he assured them over and over again it was the luckiest thing in the world that young Squire Gainsborough had sense enough to engage him, that he was equal to all the sub-agents of the other side together ; that all the elections in which he had been employed had been gained. " Catch Jin Flag not riding the winning horse," hiccupped the hero, " as for Jenkins and every man John of them, they ayn't worth that," said Jin Flag snapping his fingers, " they ayn't

no pluck at all. I'll teach them a trick or two. You leave it to me Miss. Don't you be unasy. I'll look after you as if you were my own—children. You shall know the poll every half hour, and I'll bring it myself if I can be spared," he concluded, "but if the Squire wants me for anything wery perticular," and here he stopped short, and shook his head.

"Oh! if you be wanted for anything very particular," said Miss Molesworth, "don't think of us."

"No, no," echoed Mrs. Neville, "don't think of us, if you be wanted for anything very particular."

"Why you see," said Jin Flag oracularly, "I mustn't let the cat out of the bag Miss, but you see things will turn up—there are bits of business that the Squire can't exactly

attend to himself, or even the Colonel," as he said this he nodded his head to Mrs. Neville, "or even young Squire Gainsborough, they mustn't be seen in everything, you see, and then you see they come to me and that's the truth on't," continued Mr. Jin in a chuckling strain, "for as for old Scroggin, or even Mr. Chumfield, when there's anything that requires more than two and two make four they ayn't worth *that*! Very good people your Ladyships—very good gentleman Mr. Chumfield. I wish he had declared himself sooner and Mr. Baggs too, a very good sort of person indeed, but Lord bless you they're mere children in 'lections; they don't know how to set about it, they ayn't used to this sort of thing, they don't know how to come over them, that's the fact. You twig, Miss?"



“ Yes! we quite twig,” said Helen, “ and now Jin, I think you had better go back because you’ll be wanted.”

“ I am always wanted,” said Jin.

“ Take a glass of ale before you go Jin,” said Miss Molesworth. “ Sideboard take care of Jin.”

“ Thank you Miss, I can’t stop, I can’t think of drinking ale or enjoying myself at all till I see the Squire in. I wish you good morning Ladies. Don’t be afeard. Its all right. Take my word on’t,” and then in a sotto voice to Sideboard as he made his final scrape, “ I’ll just take one glass of brandy before I go, to drink courage to the Ladies.”

What an anxious morning was this at Hartlebury. The state of the poll was forwarded by the committee every hour. Even Mr. Moles-

worth could not conceal his anxiety though he struggled hard. Even Arthur Latimer called twice in the course of the morning to hear the last intelligence.

“ Well !” Mr. Molesworth repeated twenty times in the course of the day. “ Well ! I wish Sir George had stood, however as it is, I must say I hope they will send that vagabond Prigmore to the right about.”

That vagabond Prigmore however, in spite of Mr. Molesworth’s good wishes, and Jin Flag’s secret intelligence, kept the head of the poll the whole day, although by a not very formidable majority. This was the close of the first day.

### FANCHESTER ELECTION.

STATE OF THE POLL

5 o’Clock.

BOHUN . . . . 264

PRIGMORE. . . 280

Bohun and Independence for ever !!!

The excitement of the town cannot be described. At five o'clock Mr. Bohun made a speech which made every body mad. "To day," he exclaimed, "your exertions have been glorious: to-morrow they will be triumphant." He assured the town that his success was certain, that the enemy's force was exhausted, that Prigmore would, must resign to-morrow, if not to-night, which for the sake of the peace of the town, and to save useless vexation and expense he trusted he would. A hurried note from the hero of Fanchester to the fair ladies of Hartlebury records however his secret feelings on the subject.

Committee Room,

8 o'Clock.

"Dear Ladies,

Courage. The plain truth is that, though Prigmore has apparently the best of

it, the chances are yet I think equal. I do not feel like a man who is going to be vanquished. I have confidence in my destiny. To-night we shall make great exertions. I cannot leave the town for a second, or I would ride over to Hartlebury to assure you that I am,

Your devoted,

AUBREY BOHUN."

"Gustavus sends his love, Gainsborough is too busy even to desire to be remembered. The whole affair is very diverting. If I lose I shall not regret the contest. I like electioneering better than hunting—second only to war. The people are mad with enthusiasm. The scene gives me an idea of the politics of the Greek republics. I suppose I am as much like Alcibiades as Fanchester is like Athens. Adieu!"

In the meantime, long, during the night, resounded music in every street and noisy was-sailers in every tavern. A choice selection of Mr. Bohun's committee perambulated the town in disguise, each taking his district, to confirm the wavering, to re-animate the drooping, and to gain over the adverse. No inducement was wanting. George Gainsborough with two or three aid-de-camps mounted their horses, and scoured the out town voters. They knocked up the unpolled at midnight, and succeeded in sending off to London, by the night coach a few Prigmorites who were too far pledged absolutely to rat.

About four o'clock a dead stillness fell over the town. The night was clouded. Aubrey Bohun opened the window of his room, and looked out upon the silent High Street. Per-

ceiving no passengers he muffled himself up in a livery great coat, and tying a shawl half round his face he stepped forth to enjoy one moment of quiet. As he walked along his thoughts were quick, and not uninteresting.

“ ’Tis a strange thing this life,” thought he, “ who could have supposed a year ago that my thoughts should have been centred in an obscure country town. And Gainsborough too of all men in the world my right hand friend ! It is in vain to struggle against the conviction ; there is a destiny which moulds our actions at its will—Aubrey Bohun, Esquire, M.P. for Fanchester. Ha ! ha ! ha ! What would Ulysses, and my comrades say to me, if I offered them a frank which they could not read ! Well this is life, this is excitement, and that is all I care

about. I feel I live. And yet there is something petty and vulgar in all this bustle, which half disgusts me. I who have played deep for a crown, am now forsooth a candidate for the representation of Fanchester! To be baffled by Capo d'Istrias backed by the resources of an Empire is scarcely shame—but Prigmore! oh! Aubrey, Aubrey! I fear after all you are but a headstrong boy! No matter, I will not think. Have I not abjured plans for ever? I have now two objects to gain. Neither will keep me long in suspense. To-morrow I shall know whether my country affords me a career or not: and as for Helen—by the blood of the Bohuns, I am convinced that she has better taste than the electors of Fanchester, and cannot hesitate about my fate. Courage, Aubrey, courage. If I gain her, and gain her I will,

what is Fanchester to me. For the rest, if I live I *must* be a great man. 'Tis a consoling conviction!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FATE OF FANCHESTER IN THE HANDS OF MR. GAINSBOROUGH. THE PER- PLEXITIES OF A GREAT MAN.

DAY broke, and Alderman Baggs turned in his uneasy bed. He had been troubled with uneasy dreams. Jenkins had appeared to him in his sleep. Alderman Baggs was not accustomed to dream. The sight of Jenkins sleeping or waking always made him nervous.

“We live in awful times,” pondered the

nervous Alderman, “only think of my dreaming of that fellow Jenkins. Prigmore 280—Bohun 264—sixteen a-head. Prigmore, that is Jenkins, sixteen a-head. Well, I wonder Chumfield can laugh in these times. Sixteen! sixteen a-head — and Chumfield laughed! Good God! what spirits that man has. To laugh, to laugh in these times, when Jenkins is carrying every thing before him. I must vote to-day. I am so nervous, but vote I must. If I were on my death-bed, I would vote. I vote against Jenkins. Thank God we are popular. Young Chumfield has promised to keep the way to the booth clear for me. He has spoken to that fellow Jin Flag. Oh! this Reform Bill. It makes even that scapegrace of Jin Flag a man of importance. I never gave my vote in my life except in

a snug room in the Town Hall. The cheering of our own mob quite frightens me. What should I do were I hooted. How we came to be popular all of a sudden I cannot make out. These are indeed strange times! I wish I could see my way! I cannot go to sleep again! I should like my chocolate, but I dare not ring for Dolly!"

There were many persons in Fanchester not less nervous than Mr. Alderman Baggs, though they put a better face upon the affair. Whatever might be the hopes of the populace, the better informed of both sides were generally of opinion that Prigmore would carry the day.

"They have run us harder than we expected," said Mr. Jenkins, with a thoughtful but confident look, as Prigmore's secret committee

broke up some hours past midnight, "but beat them we must. We shall beat them Dawson, we shall beat them by forty-seven."

"No fear," said Dawson: "any one but Bohun, and we should have galloped over the course. It is his confounded gift of the gab that has done all this mischief."

"Well, well, we will not quarrel with his figures of speech," said Mr. Jenkins with a sour smile, as we have the more important figures on our side. Forty-seven! I think it is clear we shall beat him at least by forty-seven! They are moving heaven and hell against us, but our lads are out. Dawson we have every thing at stake. 'Tis the old war against the Corporation again. Who would have supposed that the contest would have taken this turn! Chumfield and Baggs, I

would mortgage my factory sooner than Bohun should get in. Alderman indeed! To think of their making that Prittle-prattle an Alderman, why he compounded with his creditors, he paid my father ten shillings in the pound! And we, Dawson, warm men like us, who could buy the whole town out and out, we are slaves to Chumfield and Baggs! never!" said Mr. Jenkins, and he gnashed his teeth, "their reign is over. Their man shan't win."

The Bohunites made a great push at the opening of the second and last day's poll. At twelve o'clock thus stood the

#### STATE OF THE POLL.

BOHUN . . . . . 309.

PRIGMORE . . . . . 301.

Bohun and Independence for ever!!!

The mob shouted, but the Prigmorites were not alarmed, because it was well known that part of Mr. Bohun's committee had polled. Mr. Jenkins and his friends were, however, mistaken in ascribing this circumstance to weakness. Mr. Bohun's strength was by no means exhausted, but his committee after long consultation, had deemed it of importance to place him early on the morrow at the head of the poll, and half of them had voted, because they were electors nearer at hand than others. This circumstance however diffused great confidence amid the Bohunites and occasioned not a little triumph at Hartlebury.

"It's all right your Ladyships," said Jin Flag, who brought the intelligence. "I told you I knew a trick or two. The Squire spoke to me last night quite under the rose, you see

quite under the rose. Says he to me, 'Jin, what's to be done, you are up to the thing my man, what's to be done!' 'I know a trick or two,' says I, 'as for Chumfield and Scroggin,' says he, 'they are very good sort of people in their way.' 'I twig,' says I, 'but they know just as much about 'lections as your grandmother.' 'You're right Jin,' says he. 'Catch a weasel asleep,' says I. 'I can see with half an eye.' And so Miss this morning we're at the head of the poll, and that's how it is. I'll just take a glass of something to bring my voice round, for I have been talking all day, and then I'll go back and see what I can do for them."

From twelve to one the polling was very brisk on both sides. All Prigmore's committee polled and the rest of Bohun's. Thus affairs stood.

## FANCHESTER ELECTION.

## STATE OF THE POLL.

1 o'clock.

BOHUN . . . . . 421

PRIGMORE . . . . . 419.

Bohun and Independence for ever !!!

During the next hour everything was very languid. It was quite clear that the strength of both parties was nearly exhausted. Sick men were brought up on their beds. A blind man led by his son, a tenant of Jenkins, wanted to poll for Prigmore. The mob would not let them come to the booth, the special constables interfered, the mob, who only wanted an opportunity, showed fight, in a few minutes there was a regular row. Mr. Prigmore, who wished to gain time, applied to the Mayor to adjourn the poll, on the grounds of general



riot and that his voters were prevented from tendering their votes. The Tory Chumfield being a Bohunite, talked of the liberty of the people, saw no riot, only a fair ebullition of spirit, &c. &c., made a speech to the mob, which they cheered and refused to adjourn the poll. In the midst of this confusion, about half past two o'clock Miss Molesworth received the following note.

Rose,  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 2 o'clock.

“ My dearest Miss Molesworth,

My strength is utterly exhausted. I am two a-head. Prigmore has certainly two more votes, for Jenkins and Dawson have not polled, though nothing can prevent them, for they are standing at this moment in the booth. They count on old Gainsborough, and have sent a thousand messages and messengers, and letters, and heaven knows what to him.

George and the womankind manage that nothing shall reach him. But, dearest Miss Molesworth, it has just occurred to me that they would not prevent you. In a word, gain him for me. You can do anything I am sure; I would change my politics, my nature, my anything for you. And old Gainsborough cannot resist you. Pardon me for this. The Mayor has no casting vote in this Borough. At the best it will then be a double return, but with Gainsborough we shall beat, yes! beat!!! Again I apologize. What incoherent stuff I have written. I can only say,

I am

Your obliged, your devoted,

AUBREY."

She threw the letter to Mrs. Neville, and at the same time rang the bell.

"We can but try," she exclaimed, "we can

but try. Dearest Mrs. Neville, let us go instantly. The carriage, Sideboard, the carriage instantly—instantly. 'Tis an affair of life and death. Not a minute must be lost."

"Only think of that old fool Gainsborough," said Mrs. Neville. "Well! I declare if he persists in refusing us, I shall think him very rude indeed."

In five minutes the britchka was at the door. Helen and Mrs. Neville were of course ready.

"Oakfield — Johnson," said Miss Molesworth, "and drive as fast as you can."

When the carriage, after winding through the most sinuous road that ever led to a residence, finally stopped at the glass door of Oakfield Lodge, the servant, who immediately came forward, looked very perplexed

when Miss Molesworth enquired whether Mr. Gainsborough was at home, and said that he would go and enquire. In a few minutes he returned, and said that his master was at home to them, apologizing to the visitors for having kept them waiting, and adding that he had received strict orders from Mrs. Gainsborough to deny him to every one.

Mrs. Neville and Miss Molesworth were ushered into the library, Mr. Gainsborough's private room. The blinds were drawn, and coming immediately from the strong sun-light, a moment elapsed before the visitors could well discover the visited. In process of time however, they detected Mr. Gainsborough sitting in his library chair, with a very rueful countenance, twirling his thumbs. A long library table was placed between him and the door,

a sort of barricado that he should not escape, and two warders, in the shape of his faithful spouse and fond daughter, were placed on each side of it, to complete the precautionary measures.

Mrs. Gainsborough gave her guests a significant and complacent look as she saluted them.

“I am sorry that you were kept Miss Molesworth, very sorry indeed Mrs. Neville. But *we* are not at home to-day—that is the truth. So many people have called to-day, so many very disagreeable people, that I thought it best for Mr. Gainsborough, and for all of us, that we should not be at home. There have been fifty of Prigmore’s people here if there has been one.” She added in an undertone, “but you see I have gained my point—

I have gained my point. I hope all is going on well. We have the poll up to twelve,—Bohun quite a-head, and winning fast.”

“Affairs are not quite so bright,” said Helen, passing by and saluting Mr. Gainsborough.

“How do you do, my dear Sir ; I hope you are very well indeed.”

“Thank you, Miss Molesworth,” said the old gentleman forcing a smile. “Thank you, I am pretty well—that is to say, I am not very well. I shall be better to-morrow. I shall be better when this election is over. We shall all be quieter then. I see nothing of George. I hope he is not doing too much. He is very active for your friend Mr. Bohun, and I believe Mr. Bohun is very sensible of his kindness. They tell me here that he is quite Mr. Bohun’s

bosom friend. I am quite sure he cannot have a better friend. I approve of Mr. Bohun very much indeed. It would be quite impossible for George to have found a more desirable connection in every point of view. It is only in youth that these strong friendships are formed. They are generally formed at public schools and colleges. George had the advantage of the very best education. I sent him to Rugby and Oxford, but he did not become acquainted with Mr. Bohun at either of those places. They met first abroad. Travelling is a very great advantage.—George has had every advantage, and I must say has availed himself of them to the utmost. Every body talks to me of my accomplished son. He is, I assure you Miss Molesworth, a staunch friend of Mr. Bohun. Mr. Bohun has many friends

under this roof. I may say that all are his friends under this roof. For my part I can truly say that I wish him well. I had no idea that he could have made such a stand. I thought Jenkins would have been too much for him. I hope he will win, with all my heart. No person wishes him success more earnestly. I wish I could do more than merely wish him success, but —— but, Miss Molesworth, you know how very awkwardly I am situated.”

“My dearest Sir,” said Helen in her sweetest tone, and with her most winning smile, “Mrs. Neville and myself have come to ask you a very great favour.”

“I am sure I am very much flattered,” said Mr. Gainsborough, rather alarmed.

“But will you promise to grant it us?” enquired Helen.



“I will do for Miss Molesworth and her friends, any thing that is possible,” replied Mr. Gainsborough.

“It is very possible my dear Sir, very possible indeed. It is something that will make us all happy. That will delight your own family, and delight all Hartlebury, and delight papa, whom I am sure you are always glad to please.”

Mr. Gainsborough bowed.

“It is,” continued Miss Molesworth in a desperate tone—“it is—

“Not to vote against Mr. Bohun” interrupted Mr. Gainsborough.—“In spite of my awkward situation, I grant your request.”

“You are very good—you are very good indeed Sir,” said Miss Molesworth, “you are always very good to me. I am sure there is

no person in the world, next to papa, on whose kindness, on whose unvarying kindness, I more rely than yours."

Mr. Gainsborough seemed a little affected.

"But Sir, dear, dear Sir, the favour that we have come to ask is not that which you have granted us, but for which we feel grateful, very grateful indeed. It is not about not voting against Mr. Bohun."

"What can it be?" enquired Mr. Gainsborough, very puzzled, but more at his ease.

"We want you, dear Sir," said Miss Molesworth, and she put her arm in his, and looked into his perplexed face, "we want you to vote *for* Mr. Bohun."

"God bless me!" said Mr. Gainsborough, and he opened his mouth.

"Yes, dearest Sir, this is the simple truth.

It is the best to speak the simple truth ; it is best to be frank. There is not another vote left, not a single vote, and they are exactly equal. Only think, dear Sir, dear, dearest Mr. Gainsborough, only think the issue of the contest is in your own hands. It is in your power to return Mr. Bohun to Parliament. The country will be indebted for his splendid career, for a splendid career such a man must have, will be indebted entirely to you. Every one will say, when he makes one of his fine speeches, had it not been for Mr. Gainsborough we should not have heard this."

"But my situation," said Mr. Gainsborough very agitated, "my awkward, my unfortunate situation."

"Shall it be said," continued Miss Molesworth, "that Mr. Bohun lost his election

because Mr. Gainsborough would not vote for him? What will the world say? How every one will wonder. Mr. Gainsborough, — his friend, his neighbour, his fellow-magistrate, the father of his bosom friend, the intimate friend of all his intimate friends, one of his very set, his own fire-side, one with whom he is in terms of daily, of hourly, of the most cordial and complete intercourse. On whom might Mr. Bohun count if not on Mr. Gainsborough? If Oakfield, and Bohun, and Hartlebury, do not draw together, where is there a foundation for union!"

"But my promise,—Mr. Prigmore — Mr. Jenkins," said Mr. Gainsborough, touched to the very quick by being classed with his aristocratic neighbours, and looking upon his wife and daughter who stood crying, and then at

Mrs. Neville, who was not used to scenes, and was quite confused.

“What is Prigmore! what is Jenkins to you!” responded Helen. “Your promise! What promise? You promised Mr. Prigmore as against Sir George Vavasour. Sir George has resigned, and a new candidate starts. The circumstances on which you made your promise are changed. We are all governed by circumstances, Mr. Gainsborough! Circumstances are too strong for the strongest of us.”

“It is most true,” said Mr. Gainsborough.

“Mr. Bohun’s principles are your’s. He is a liberal only—he is not a Whig. Mr. Bohun agrees with you on every point. He has the highest opinion of your opinions on political subjects. I know it. I have often heard him

say so. Only think how delightful, dear Sir, to have a person in the House, a leading person, one who speaks and must carry weight from his great talents and property, only think of having a friend, a most intimate friend in the House under such circumstances consulting you on all points! You will in fact be a Member of Parliament yourself without the trouble of the office, and when Mr. Bohun is Prime Minister only think of your influence, you who in fact introduced him to public life and guided his early career by your counsels!"

"Only think," exclaimed Mrs. Gainsborough sobbing.

"Only think," echoed Miss Gainsborough with her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I wonder if Aubrey will be Prime Minister," said the wondering Mrs. Neville. "It never occurred to me."

“ He is certain,” said Mrs. Gainsborough.

“ He is sure,” echoed Miss Gainsborough.

“ I wish I had never acted with Jenkins,” said Mr. Gainsborough : “ what was Jenkins to me ? I wish I had never promised Prigmore.”

“ But you say, my dear Sir, that you do not intend to keep a promise which was entirely provisional. The promise was provisional, and the circumstances having changed, the promise is not kept. If you are free not to keep your promise as you have decided, so also you must be free to act as you please. It may be annoying to vote against a man whom you once provisionally promised to support, but will it not be more annoying to injure and to annoy all your friends, to destroy Mr. Bohun’s career, to disoblige Papa, to occa-

sion me the greatest grief, to make your own family miserable, to cause a coolness, perhaps an enmity between your son and his friend, and wantonly to destroy a connection which may realize all your plans and hopes and prospects !”

“ Yes! indeed” said Mrs. Gainsborough. “ I have told him this a thousand times. If Mr. Bohun were prime minister, he would make him a Baronet.”

“ Psha! my dear,” said Mr. Gainsborough.

“ And put George in Parliament,” said Miss Gainsborough.

“ For God’s sake leave off crying, women,” said the unhappy father, “ never, no never was man in such an awkward situation as I am.”



“ You will break my heart,” said Mrs. Gainsborough.

“ You have broken mine,” said the daughter.

“ My dear wife, my own Fanny, for God’s sake be calm. I intreat you to be calm. I am thinking of what Miss Molesworth has said. I am thinking for the best. I am indeed. I wish to act for the best. I wish I could split my vote between Prigmore and Mr. Bohun, but that will not do. I wish I could oblige every body. I am very awkwardly situated, that is the truth, no man perhaps was ever more awkwardly situated. What am I to do? How can I act? Mr. Bohun is my friend, my neighbour, a brother magistrate. And his friends are my friends? They have set their hearts on his return, that they have—and very

proper too. I cannot conceive a more proper person to be a member of Parliament, great fortune, great talents, immense fortune indeed, talents not less considerable. What is Prigmore to me? Oakfield should support Bohun, that is quite clear. When I promised Prigmore I meant to say that I would vote against a Tory. I beg your pardon Miss Molesworth for abusing the Tories. I shouldn't wonder if they came in yet. If they would only give up the Church and the Corn Laws I would be a Tory myself. I have no objection to war, as much as you please. I made my fortune by war. Commerce never flourished half as well as in war time. I always supported Pitt and would again. I wish to act for the best. I always have done. The promise was provisional, that is quite clear. I wish I had never

seen Jenkins. He is a long-headed fellow. I had no idea that Mr. Bohun would have made such a stand. It is not a point of honour; there is no honour in the case, it is a point of delicacy. It is rather awkward certainly to vote against Mr. Prigmore when I promised to vote for him. As against the Tory though mind—at least that was my intention, and men can only be guided by their intentions, I don't care what Jenkins says. I am the best judge of my own meaning. And as for Prigmore he will go up to town again by the coach. I shall never see him again, whereas I shall meet Mr. Bohun every day. How can I look him in the face after making him lose his election? I certainly am very awkwardly situated, but for a point of delicacy, for there is no honour in the case at all, am I called upon, as

Miss Molesworth says, to injure and annoy all my friends, to destroy Mr. Bohun's career, to disoblige Mr. Molesworth, to occasion Miss Molesworth the greatest grief, to make my own family miserable, to cause a coolness, perhaps an enmity, between my own son and his friend, and wantonly to destroy a connection which may realize all my plans and hopes and prospects? That is the question, that is the short and simple question. Shall I, ought I, in short to vote for Mr. Bohun? Is it my duty to vote for Mr. Bohun? I am surrounded by my best friends, they know all the circumstances of the case, and I shall be decided by their determination."

"It is your duty," said Mrs. Gainsborough eagerly.

"Your bounden duty," said her daughter.

“ You will oblige and delight every body,” said Miss Molesworth, “ and be the most popular man in the neighbourhood.”

“ I am sure I shall be charmed,” said Mrs. Neville.

“ I wish George were here to take me to the poll,” said Mr. Gainsborough. “ I should be sorry to meet Jenkins, or Dawson, or Prigmore. They might prevent me. What is best to be done?”

“ No time is to be lost,” said Miss Molesworth. “ Our carriage is at the door, come with us. Mrs. Neville and I will take you up to the poll. You do not object, Emmeline?”

“ Not in the least,” said Mrs. Neville gaily. “ I suppose it will not be a greater mob than a drawing-room, and as we are on the right side they will not be very rude.” So saying,

each lady took hold of one of Mr. Gainsborough's arms. Mrs. Gainsborough ran and fetched his hat, and Miss Gainsborough his cane, and in less than five minutes he was going as fast as Miss Molesworth's spirited horses could take him, to vote for Mr. Bohun.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A MEMBER RETURNED.

It was a quarter to four o'clock, at which hour the poll finally closed. During the last hour not a single elector had tendered his vote. The mob were tolerably quiet, as they believed that Bohun was all right: among the better informed a dark rumour began to run of the real state of affairs, and there were mysterious whisperings of a double return. With the ex-

ception of the leaders each party was however sanguine that some error in the summing up would be discovered, of course in favour of their man. The candidates had just made their appearance on the hustings attended by their friends. Mr. Bohun looked gay and nodded and smiled to the populace. Prigmore was very bilious. Jenkins had lost his firm, arrogant, purse-proud scowl. He looked downcast and jaded.

“ He don’t like it at all,” said Tim the mechanic to his comrade.

“ My eye! no, doey? He’s dead beat or I’m a Dutchman.”

“ Twig Prigmore Tim: he looks for all the world like a mouldy lemon.”

“ Or a rotten egg.”

“ I say Thorpe how’s your man?”



“ He pretends he don’t hear nothing.”

“ I say Thorpe what’s the matter with Muster Prigmore? He ayn’t got the mulligrubs, have he?”

“ Prigmore !” halloed one of the mob, who caught this delicate enquiry, “ how are you off for cholera?”

“ Bohun for ever ! No Treasury Nominee!” shouted a hoarse voice.

Ten minutes to four. A loud cheer is heard in the distance. A britchka appears, the spirited horses champing their bits and caracoling amid the mob. Mrs. Neville and Mr. Gainsborough sit at the back of the carriage, Miss Molesworth opposite to them. Jin Flag runs before them clearing the way.

Make way there, make way there. Make way for an Elector. A wote for Squire Bohun,

Bohun the friend of the people. Make way here, make way. Go it my hearties, go it! One cheer more!—Hurra!—Bohun for ever! Now stand aside now, do, do stand aside.—We shall be too late now, by G—d we shall be too late, and I shall lose all my pains.—Stand aside, I say—What, you wont?—Here's a Prig-morite—knock him down, boys—toss him in a blanket—pump over him!—Bohun for ever!—Go it! go it!—One cheer more—Go it, my hearties!—Aside, aside there!—now do stand aside, my good fellow make room for a woter—room—room!—Room for Squire Gainsborough!”

“Gainsborough for ever!”—shouted the mob.

“Matchless girl!” said Aubrey Bohun, seizing George Gainsborough's arm. — “By

heavens, we have won the day!—Now, Gustavus, now Gainsborough, come with me—we will escort your father to the poll.”

“We’re done,” said Jenkins to Dawson, and he clenched his arm with his pallid hand.

“The incarnate traitor!” said Dawson.

“Make room there, make room,” said the jolly mayor. “Special constables, do your duty. Clear the way to the poll. Clear the way for an elector.”

“I demand that the poll be closed,” said Jenkins. “It is on the stroke of four.

“I know my duty, Mr. Jenkins,” said the mayor, in a dignified tone, “and I shall close the poll when I think proper.”

“Mr. Prigmore,” said Jenkins, very loudly, that all might hear, “Mr. Gainsborough has

come to vote.—Mr. Gainsborough, who promised you. Keep him to his word Mr. Prigmore—Keep him to his word.”

Up came Mr. Gainsborough, between his son and Colonel Neville. Mr. Bohun remained at the carriage with his fair friends.

“I hope you have come to redeem your promise, sir,” said Mr. Prigmore, as Mr. Gainsborough advanced.

“I have come to do my duty,” said Mr. Gainsborough very firmly, inspirited by the cheering of the mob.

“You promised your vote to Mr. Prigmore,” said Jenkins, very loudly and rudely.

“I am a witness.”

“And I too,” said Dawson.

“Against Sir George Vavasour sir,” said Mr. Gainsborough.

“Against every one,” said Jenkins, losing all command over himself. “Do you call yourself a gentleman, indeed! You are no gentleman.”

“You are no man of your word,” said Dawson.

“I despise you,” said Jenkins.

“You deserve to be kicked,” said Dawson.

“I should like to see you, or any other blackguard, kick my father,” said George Gainsborough.

“Bravo young squire!” shouted the mob.  
“Go it, young cock.”

“And if you, and that man by you, do not instantly cease your insolence, I will horsewhip you before the whole town.”

“Sooner said than done,” said bully Dawson. “Two can play at that.”

“ We shall beat you yet,” — said Jenkins.

“ For whom do you tender your vote ? ”  
said the poll-clerk to Mr. Gainsborough.

“ He promised Mr. Prigmore,” bellowed Jenkins to the mob.

“ It won’t do, Jenkins,” — was the answer.

“ It’s no go.”

“ You’re diddled, Jenkins.”

“ I hopes you like it, Jenkins.”

“ I say, — Jenkins, — ayn’t you a nice man ? ”

“ Gainsborough for ever.”

“ You wanted to be member of Parliament, Jenkins ? ”

“ I say, Jenkins, Muster Prigmore looks werry ill.”

“Take him home, Jenkins.”

“I say, Jenkins, you’ve killed Prigmore.”

“There’ll be a Crowner’s inquest!”

“It’s manslaughter at the least.”

“Jenkins, go to bed!”

“For whom do you tender your vote?”

said the poll-clerk to Mr. Gainsborough.

There was a dead silence.

“For Aubrey Bohun, Esquire,” was the tremulous answer.

“Hurra!!!” was the universal shout.

The clock struck four.

The poll-books were already summed up. This additional vote alone was to be added. In five minutes the crier prayed silence, and the final state of the poll of the famous Fanchester election was declared.

## FANCHESTER ELECTION.

FINAL CLOSE OF THE POLL, SECOND DAY.

AUBREY BOHUN, ESQ. . . . 434.

PETER PRIGMORE, ESQ. . . . 433.

And the jolly Chumfield came forward, and, amid loud cheers, declared that Aubrey Bohun, Esquire, was returned to Parliament, as Burgess for the borough of Fanchester.



## CHAPTER X.

### A BALL AT BOHUN.

THAT calm which succeeds excitement was not the agreeable fortune of the inhabitants of Fanchester and its neighbourhood. Christmas festivities succeeded to electioneering struggles. Mr. Bohun dined with his constituents in the town-hall, and, in return, feasted the electors in a series of banquets surrounded by the portraits of his fathers. The invitations

were extended alike to opponents and supporters, and a large portion of the former attended. Twenty oxen were roasted whole by his orders in the borough on Christmas-day. He gave away two hundred chaldrons of coal, and a thousand pair of blankets. Finally he ordered Mr. Chace to advance money to the industrious at three per cent. It was quite clear that the reign of the Low Whig Oligarchs had ceased for ever. All paid off their mortgages to Jenkins and Co. No more hard interest at short dates. It was evident, as Jenkins whispered in a deadly voice to Dawson, that Fanchester was a Bohun borough.

Between the days of public banquets, Mr. Bohun amused himself with private dinner parties. The Castle was a scene of continual wassail, and finally, invitations to a grand

ball were circulated throughout the whole county. Every one was invited, from the Earl of Courtland to the family of the humblest Squireen. Notwithstanding all these calls upon his time, a day seldom passed during the fortnight, which had elapsed since the Election, that did not find Mr. Bohun a visitor at Hartlebury. Every day there was an excuse for meeting. Sometimes there was a large riding party; sometimes the ladies were to see the hounds throw off; sometimes in-door pursuits engaged their attention, and now there were perpetual conferences and consultations about the arrangements for the ball.

“Arthur, you are to go with me to the ball,” said Helen to Mr. Latimer.

“Helen, you know I detest dancing,” was the reply. “I cannot conceive any man more

misplaced than I am in a ball-room. You must excuse me."

"I am resolved you shall go Arthur, you are my beau. I have no idea of entering a ball-room on the arm of papa. It would be quite shocking, would it not Sir?"

"Oh! — terrible," said Mr. Molesworth, "but much more shocking for me to enter a ball-room with my daughter upon my arm. You must get Mrs. Latimer to chaperone you, Helen. I shall stay at home."

"What am I to do for a beau?" said Helen. "Arthur, you are to go."

"There is Mr. George Gainsborough," said Mr. Latimer, not very amiably. "He is a favourite of your's, or at least was."

Helen stared, but did not reply. She never remembered Arthur Latimer speaking with such an evident tone of pique.

The day of the ball arrived. Mr. Molesworth in spite of his asseverations went. Mrs. Latimer was really prevented by indisposition, but nothing could induce Arthur Latimer to leave home, and what was most provoking, he would not even make his mother's illness an excuse for his obstinacy.

Bohun Castle was illuminated. Every chamber was thrown open. The crash of carriages was worthy of a great house in Piccadilly. The quadrangle was a sea of waving flambeaus: the staircase was lined with footmen and pages in splendid liveries. As you entered the ball-room the brilliant blaze of the chandeliers, and the magnificence of the orange trees and exotic plants made you for a moment insensible to the fanciful decorations of the sumptuous chamber. The room was

crowded ; as the Molesworths made their way up the staircase, Mrs. Escott saluted them.

“ Every body asked,” she said, “ no distinction of parties, very handsome of him isn’t it ?”

Mr. Bohun and Mrs. Neville came forward to receive them.

“ Do you think the room looks as well as the first time we lit it up ?” he said to Helen, “ that happy evening !” he continued.

Before she could reply, Mr. Bohun was obliged to leave her to welcome a new party. The Molesworths consequently moved away.

Colonel Neville came up, and engaged Helen to dance with him. “ Aubrey you know *must* open the ball with Lady Courtland,” he said with a somewhat significant smile, “ otherwise I dare not take this liberty. I assure you I am acting under orders.”

Helen laughed, for to such observations a laugh is the only answer.

Her father yielded her to her partner. "I suppose," was his valedictory lament, "I suppose there is no rubber."

"What a revolution Mr. Bohun's return has made!" said Helen to the Colonel. "It really seems like a dream."

"You see there was some policy after all in staying away so long," replied the Colonel, "if this had always been going on, I suppose we should have thought it a bore."

As they were dancing, she could not help smiling as she overheard Dr. Maxwell, Mr. Gainsborough's son-in-law, holding forth to a county gentleman and his spouse, who evidently looked upon him as an oracle.

"A great thing indeed for the county, a

very great thing indeed; a still greater thing for the neighbourhood. The greatest thing that could possibly happen to Fanchester, Mr. Bohun's return! Quite the making of the neighbourhood. Splendid property. It's a satisfaction to see a splendid property like Bohun fall to the lot of a man who takes pleasure in assembling his friends around him. I am sure all Fanchester must be grateful to my father-in-law! Entirely owing to him, entirely, entirely! The greatest sacrifice, the very greatest possible sacrifice of feeling, I do assure you, sir, but when duty is in the case, Mr. Gainsborough never hesitates. I differ with Mr. Gainsborough, I differ with my father-in-law on some public points, I have no hesitation in saying so, I certainly do differ with him, but I defy any one to say that when duty is con-



cerned, when duty is in the case, that Mr. Gainsborough, that my father-in-law ever hesitates. Entirely owing to him. The people of Fanchester, and indeed the whole county, sir, may thank Oakfield Lodge for all this!"

"How do you do Chumfield?" said the Earl of Courtland to our friend the jolly brewer, "how is Mrs. Chumfield, I have not seen her here? How are your daughters? How is your eldest son? A most promising young man, your eldest son, we shall make something of him. How is your younger son? How does he like College? Let me see, at Haileybury, I think? We shall see him a Director some day. Your nephew likes Sydney? great opening there, no doubt he will do very well, immense fortunes to be made at Sydney. What does he think of the wool? How is my friend Mr. Baggs?

Pray remember me to my excellent friend Mr. Baggs. A very long head indeed has Mr. Baggs. You managed your election admirably Chumfield. The eyes of all England were on you. Things will mend Chumfield, things will mend. I saw your friend Sir George, the other day. He asked after you."

And the Earl moved on to overwhelm some other gratified county man with his flattering queries, and marvellous memory.

Mr. Bohun was dancing with Miss Molesworth.

"Are you amused?" he enquired.

"Very!" she replied, "I hope you share my diversion."

"I only reflect your feelings," he answered.

"If you smile, I am happy."

He spoke in so serious a tone that Helen

scarcely ventured on her customary repartee, and was silent.

“ I fear you will find this room very hot. I wanted to have the quadrangle covered over but Emmeline overruled me. I perceive that it is impossible ever to have an opinion of my own, and sooth to say, I am not very anxious to enjoy that privilege. I like to be ruled.”

“ You have always given me that idea,” observed Miss Molesworth, “ you seem exactly the sort of person who would bear restraint admirably !”

“ You mock me ! 'Tis very true though. I have never passed three months in my life as my own master. Ruled I must be, but by a woman, Miss Molesworth, by a woman, mind you ! Emmeline manages me in little things, and you in great.”

“ I !” said the astonished Helen.

“ You,” calmly replied Bohun.

“ Where is my sceptre !” she gaily exclaimed. “ I had no idea of my sway.”

“ It is absolute,” said Mr. Bohun with a very serious countenance. “ All I hope is that it will be merciful.”

“ Do you admire Miss Molesworth ?” said Miss Gertrude Fanshawe to Mr. George Gainsborough, as they were dancing opposite Mr. Bohun and our heroine.

“ I believe she is admired,” was the cautious reply.

“ So I understand,” said Miss Fanshawe.

“ I cannot say she is at all my style of beauty. I think she has not countenance enough for her height.”

“ She certainly is not at all your style of

beauty," thought George Gainsborough as he looked at his meagre, sallow companion. Miss Fanshawe passed the season regularly in London, and was considered a very fashionable young lady indeed.

"I suppose its a mere flirtation between her and Mr. Bohun?" continued Miss Fanshawe.

"Assuredly," said George Gainsborough, "Aubrey Bohun is not a marrying man."

"He seems to have turned her head though," continued Miss Fanshawe, "by all we hear. All the county is talking of her interference in the Election. Un peu trop fort, I think," she observed, looking up into Mr. George Gainsborough's face with her brilliant black eyes, and grinning maliciously with her brilliant white teeth.

George Gainsborough slightly shrugged his shoulders.

“ Why one gets interested in an Election,” said George Gainsborough. “ I did extraordinary things myself, though I am not apt to exert myself, for what some witty writer calls ‘ the brown sex.’ ”

“ You knew Mr. Bohun abroad ?” enquired Miss Fanshawe.

“ I did.”

“ And you have been a very odd sort of person yourself, I believe ?”

“ The present moment is too charming to remember the past,” replied George Gainsborough mysteriously.

“ I think you live near Bohun ?” said Miss Fanshawe, who was too aristocratic to know anything of the whereabouts of the Gainsbo-

roughs, but who was sufficiently acquainted with the world to know that George Gainsborough, at a county ball, was a man of mark, and likelihood, and that a son may be "very knowing," while a father and mother and sisters may be things too horrible even to think of.

"My father's place joins the Bohun property."

"What is its name?"

"Oakfield; Oakfield Lodge."

"Oakfield! Dear me! I thought I knew every place in the county, and I never heard of Oakfield."

"I know nothing about the county," said George Gainsborough rallying. "I scarcely ever live at home, and seldom in England. It is too uninteresting. I detest the regular jog-

trot existence of English life. I require adventure. I think I shall return to Greece."

The Corsair-like air with which this observation was made quite silenced Miss Fanshawe, who was soon on her better behaviour, and in the course of the evening glided very gracefully into a strong flirtation with the heir apparent of the unheard of Oakfield.

The night wore away. The Earl of Courtland was conversing with Mrs. Neville and Miss Molesworth. Mr. George Gainsborough approached them.

"As this ball is to celebrate our triumph Miss Molesworth," he said, addressing that lady in an under tone, "while we are enjoying the fruits, I hope you will remember a



fellow-labourer in the vine-yard. Might I hope for the honour of your hand?"

"I had determined to dance no more," said Helen, "but you have made an appeal which I cannot resist," and George Gainsborough led her to the quadrille.

"Do you know Mr. Gainsborough," said Miss Molesworth suddenly in one of the pauses, "it has always struck me as most singular that you should not have remembered Mr. Bohun,—such a brilliant person could surely not have been forgotten."

George Gainsborough looked rather confused; but he answered, "You are quite right. Whoever once knows Mr. Bohun could never forget him."

"But you have not explained the mystery," said Miss Molesworth.

“Mystery!” said George Gainsborough.

“Yes! mystery,” said Miss Molesworth,  
“for a mystery I am sure there is.”

“You are quite right,” again observed George Gainsborough, but with a more assured demeanour. “There is a mystery.”

“And I am not to penetrate it?” said Miss Molesworth.

“Those eyes can penetrate anything,” said Mr. George Gainsborough, who had drank a sufficient quantity of Champaigne.

“You silence me with a compliment. ’Tis discreet, but useless. I have made up my mind to know every thing. Tell me.”

“The revelation may not be agreeable,” said George Gainsborough.

“I cannot see how it can be disagreeable to me,” said Miss Molesworth.

“I wish that I could be assured of that,” said Mr. George Gainsborough.

“Of what?” enquired Miss Molesworth.

“I wish I was convinced that anything I could say about Mr. Bohun could not be a subject of interest to you Miss Molesworth.”

“Said I so?” enquired Helen, “indeed I meant no such thing.”

George Gainsborough looked mortified, and began talking about the chandeliers.

“But you were in fact mystifying me then,” continued Miss Molesworth, determined to return to the subject, “when you said that you did not remember Mr. Bohun?”

“I never mystify, Miss Molesworth,” replied George Gainsborough. “I am a much franker person than you give me credit for. I did not remember the name, because I had

never to my knowledge met any person abroad who bore it."

"Darker than ever," said Miss Molesworth, "and what was Mr. Bohun's nom de guerre?"

"De guerre indeed! You are nearer the truth than you imagine, but the truth is Miss Molesworth, it is no use asking me any questions, for I have at all times a bad memory, and at the present moment all my recollection is concentrated in this ball-room."

"With Miss Fanshawe?" said Helen laughing, who did not deem it advisable to pursue her enquiries.

"The charming, the fashionable Miss Fanshawe," said George Gainsborough laughing, "she admires you very much," he continued.

“Do you know she talked to me a great deal about you?”

“Now tell me everything she said. Do not spare me. I am in a very curious humour to-night, and as you will tell me nothing about yourself, let me, for the want of a better, be the subject of your discourse.”

George Gainsborough laughed. “Miss Fanshawe,” he said, “is of opinion that Mr. Bohun ought to be very grateful to you?”

“Indeed! and for what?”

“For making him a Member of Parliament.”

“There are so many persons concerned in that catastrophe,” replied Miss Molesworth, “that I think Mr. Bohun may very safely be ungrateful. I assure you I had the mortifica-

tion to hear your brother-in-law ascribe all our success this evening to Oakfield. And what else did Miss Fanshawe say?"

"Oh! she was curious."

"And so am I, very, very curious. Tell me all."

"Miss Fanshawe," replied Mr. Gainsborough, "appears to be a great connoisseur in what she calls flirtations."

"Well?"

"And she is extremely anxious to know whether there be a flirtation between you and Mr. Bohun."

"She applied to you for information, and you answered her. You ought to be a judge. Well what was your response?"

"I forget."

"Nay! all your recollections you know

are concentrated in this ball-room. You shall answer me."

"To be frank then, which I always am," said George Gainsborough, "I told her I thought there was not."

George Gainsborough scrutinised her countenance narrowly. Miss Molesworth did not look mortified. Was she indeed indifferent, or was she confident? He was determined to ascertain.

"I said," he continued, "that to use her own language, I did not believe there was any serious feeling between yourself and Mr. Bohun, for two reasons; first, because I could not conceive that there ever could exist a man worthy of Miss Molesworth; and secondly, because I knew Aubrey Bohun very well, and was convinced that he would never marry."

“I think Papa is looking for me,” said Miss Molesworth, in a rather hurried tone, “just cross over, and tell him that I shall be ready to go, when we have finished the quadrille.”



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE HEART CHASTENED IN A SICK CHAMBER.

ON the morning after the ball, Aubrey Bohun rose with the most agreeable feelings. His recollections were delightful, his anticipations were not less so. He determined to ride directly over to Hartlebury. And why, thought he, should not this visit be a decisive one? In a week I must away to London, why should I part from her without a word of hope to

dwell upon during separation? He mused on all that had past the evening before, he had said so much that he felt that Helen must understand him, it was therefore incumbent on him to explain himself. In fact, Aubrey Bohun was in the mood to try his fate, and we none of us, even the most dull, fail of reasons in abundance to support us in doing what we have already determined on.

It was a clear frosty day, a brilliant sun made a glittering scene. This bright morning is ominous of good, thought Mr. Bohun as he vaulted into his saddle.

Notwithstanding the interesting mission on which he was bent, he could not be insensible to the beauty of his ride. The Park looked enchanted, every thing was sparkling. The white frost hung in fantastic forms on the leaf-

less branches, and the pendent icicles trembled under the warm sun. Every now and then a timorous hare disturbed by the horse's step bounded from its warm covert, and scampered across the path, scarcely disturbing the brilliant crystallizations that covered each blade of grass.—

But on this day the triumphant Aubrey Bohun was destined to endure disappointment. When he arrived at Hartlebury he found every body in trouble and confusion. During the preceding night Mrs. Latimer, who had been of late slightly indisposed, though without any symptom which caused alarm, had been suddenly seized with a most severe attack of paralysis, and was now lying insensible, it was feared without hope of recovery. Miss Molesworth had been at the Rectory ever since

nine o'clock, and was not expected to return home.

Helen had returned from the Ball exhausted both in mind and body. Certain vague but disagreeable sensations added to her fatigue, but she was too tired to examine into the cause of them, she could only wonder how she could ever have thought George Gainsborough agreeable. But she did not wonder long even over this great mistake, for she soon sank into that dreamless slumber which follows physical exhaustion. After the refreshment of a very few hours repose her servant entered the room. She opened the shutters with a most officious bustle, she undrew the bed-curtains. She stirred the fire, she even began to prepare the toilette.

“Is it very late?” asked the disturbed sleeper plaintively.

“ No not *very* late Ma’am. It is very nearly nine o’clock,” answered the maid, who directly Helen spoke advanced, and took up a position by the bed-side.

“ That is very early,” murmured Helen, “ how could you disturb me so soon Hardy ?” “ I dare say you are tired Ma’am, but *still* I thought you would like to get up,” said Hardy with that particular air of agitating mystery with which ladies’ maids are wont to communicate intelligence.

“ What is the matter ?” asked Helen, now thoroughly disturbed by Hardy’s manner, “ I am sure there is something the matter.”

“ Pray do not agitate yourself Ma’am, I hope it will be nothing after all, only I thought you would rather know it directly.”

“ Tell me quickly Hardy what is the

matter? Is my father ill?" said Helen, now quite awake, and almost frightened out of her senses.

"Pray Ma'am do not be so agitated, do not alarm yourself," here Helen gasped for breath. "It is not my master Ma'am, my master is quite well. Don't be frightened Ma'am, Mr. Trueman has come by this time, and I dare say Mrs. Latimer is already better."

For this day and many succeeding ones, did Mrs. Hardy expatiate in the Housekeeper's room on the very *pertickler* clever way she had of conveying unpleasant intelligence.

Helen was soon dressed, as she descended the stairs she knocked at her father's door, he was already up.

"Dear Helen," he said, as he kissed her pale cheek, "you have heard the sad intelli-

gence, I trust it is not as serious as Arthur's fears anticipate, I have this moment heard from him."

Mr. Molesworth put into her hand a few almost illegible lines from Arthur Latimer, which said that Mr. Trueman had just arrived but gave little hope.

"Poor Arthur," said Helen while the tears poured down her cheeks, "he must want help, and consolation. I am going now, dear Papa, you will soon see him."

Mr. Trueman's gig was still at the gate as Helen entered the Rectory, she turned into the breakfast parlour. Mr. Trueman and Arthur Latimer were leaning against the mantel-piece in earnest conversation. Arthur Latimer advanced to meet her.

"Is she better?" asked Helen in a low voice-

Arthur shook his head.

“ May I go to her ?” she asked of Mr. Trueman.

“ You must not think of it,” said Mr. Latimer affectionately, in the midst of his trouble he could still remember all that concerned Helen. “ You have not been home very long, you can scarcely have been in bed. You must already be over fatigued.”

“ I had forgotten all that,” said Helen, with so much truth and feeling that Arthur Latimer unconsciously pressed her hand.

“ Only tell me Mr. Trueman, what is necessary to be done,” said Helen.

“ Nothing my dear Madam, can be done beyond what I have already prescribed,” said the solemn doctor, “ now all depends on quiet, on the most perfect quiet. Entire absence of



all noise. It is an attack of what we call paralysis, and all depends, my dear Madam, on quiet."

Helen lightly stepped into Mrs. Latimer's bed chamber, she advanced to the bed-side, there lay her beloved friend, with her eyes half closed, perfectly unconscious. Helen took her hand as it lay on the coverlid, it was so totally without power that she almost thought that it was all over.

"Ah! Ma'am," sobbed Nugent, the old servant of the family, "she will never recover, it is just the way my poor master went."

Helen took her station by the bed-side, which she was determined not to abandon. All through that day did she watch without hope. Towards evening Nugent persuaded her to try to sleep. Helen laid down on the sofa and

closed her eyes, and endeavoured to compose herself, but during the last twenty-four hours she had experienced such varied and painful excitement that it was very long before sleep came to the aid of her overstrained nerves. At last however her excited senses subsided into an uneasy slumber, and she dreamt that she was at Fanchester. The streets were full of crowds of people, and they all told her that she would be too late. She was going to vote for Mr. Bohun, she looked at the great church clock, it was going to strike, in a minute she would be too late, she felt almost suffocated in the crowd. All of a sudden George Gainsborough was walking by her side, he said he could take her a better way to the booth, and he led her away from the crowd, out of the Town. He said they would soon be at the

booth, for it was a private way no one knew but himself, and so on and on they went, and she grew very frightened, and a hollow malicious laugh resounded in her ear, and she turned round, and it was no longer George Gainsborough at her side, but a most malignant looking being who whispered in her ear, "While you are walking here, Mrs. Latimer is dead."

Helen awoke in great agitation, and it was some minutes before she could recal her wandering senses, before she could remember where she was, and through the flickering light of the solitary lamp perceive the servant watching by the side of Mrs. Latimer.

Trueman came again early in the morning, he still shook his head, he could give no hope. But the young are naturally full to hope, their

buoyant hearts through the gloom of the deepest affliction quickly detect a glimmer of light. Hitherto Helen had been overwhelmed by the suddenness of the shock, but she now began to rally, and towards the close of the second day when she went down stairs to give her evening bulletin to Arthur Latimer, she dared to speak words of comfort.

And Helen was a comforter whom none could resist, for her manner was as judicious as it was soothing, and Arthur Latimer yielded with gratitude to her influence. Of late a somewhat colder and more distant intercourse had almost imperceptibly arisen between them. She knew that he had disapproved of much that she had been led to do in the ardor of the Election, and he disliked Mr. Bohun for having required from Helen acts of friendship,

which he deemed unbecoming her delicacy and refinement. But now in this moment of sorrow all was forgotten, he thought not of the strangers, who had of late so much disturbed him, he thought only of his mother's sufferings, and of Helen's kindness.

But not so Helen, as she sat that night by Mrs. Latimer's bed side, her thoughts insensibly reverted from her friend to others. She thought of that friend's unvarying kindness, of the sincerity of her affection. Here, mused Helen, is one who never deceived me, next to my dear father, here perhaps is my best friend. All this family love me, I can depend upon them all, for they are all truth and sincerity Ah! there is no happiness in this life without the full consciousness of being able to trust those who profess to love you. She dwelt with

earnestness on the beauty of truth ; beyond her own beloved friends there seemed to be everywhere double dealing and duplicity and mystery. The truth is that Helen had lately seen more of the world. The election had shown her something of the secret springs which work poor human nature. She had seen persons apparently the most respectable and the most honest swayed only by their interest. How often had she herself been the tempter. Her conduct with regard to Mr. Gainsborough too, had for some time been rather a disagreeable subject of thought, but now in this quiet silent room, perhaps soon to be the abode of death, all the excitement over, every thing appeared in its true colours, she was disgusted with the whole affair, and with—herself. This was perhaps the first time that Helen Moles-

worth's cogitations had been so little satisfactory. And she remembered the words of Arthur Latimer, "Ought we not to fear one who so captivates our reason that we forget the difference between right and wrong?" Alas! she felt that we ought. It was Mr. Bohun's brilliancy which had dazzled her; for that which now appeared to her so disgusting, so mean, and so dishonorable, had seemed at the time under his representations the most natural thing in the world which it would have been an over-fastidiousness to refuse. And Mr. Bohun himself, how strange and mysterious every thing was about him. What did George Gainsborough mean by telling her that Mr. Bohun would never marry. Did he mean the intelligence for a warning to her? Did she need the warning? She shrank not from

the question : could she yield her love, could she desert her father, her fond, her darling parent, for one whom she had known but a few months ; known, could she even now say known ? What did she know of him ?—that he had lived under an assumed name in a mysterious manner in distant countries. She shuddered as she thought that she might perhaps have been so dazzled, her reason so captivated, that she might have been betrayed even into that. She mistrusted herself, she feared, she doubted every body. Every body seemed false and deceiving. She turned to the bed, she kissed the hand of her unconscious friend, and she bathed it with her tears.

In the meantime while these meditations, so little favourable to his wishes, occupied the mind of Helen Molesworth, Mr. Bohun never



failed to call each day at Hartlebury, and each day a little note-lette was delivered to Helen either from him or from Mrs. Neville, to tell her again and again how much they grieved with her, how much they feared to hear that she was suffering from her exertions, and how miserable they were at the thought of leaving Bohun without again seeing her.

Earlier than usual one morning came a note from Mrs. Neville, to tell her that their journey was finally arranged for the next day, and to beg to see her if it were possible, if it were only for a minute. Helen could not refuse such a request.

At the appointed hour, Helen heard the tramp of horse's feet at the Rectory gate, she descended into the small breakfast room. She found there Mrs. Neville and Mr. Bohun.

“ Dearest Helen,” said Mrs. Neville as she advanced to meet her, and she kissed her pale cheek.

Helen returned her embrace, but she could not speak. For a week she had scarcely left Mrs. Latimer’s bed-side, the confinement and the grief had weakened her, and coming now from the closed darkened room of the invalid into that gay room, bright in the sunshine, she felt for a moment overpowered.

Mr. Bohun looked pained at her affliction. He did not speak, but he took her offered hand with an expression of sympathy, which could not be misunderstood, and which was infinitely more grateful to her feelings than Mrs. Neville’s fluent ejaculations.

“ My dear Helen,” said that lady, “ this is indeed a grievous end to all our gaieties. I

would not let Gustavus come, I thought we should be too many. I assure you he is dying to see you again. I promised him I would bear to you his best love. I could not refuse to bring Aubrey. Aubrey, you know, could not go without thanking you for all you have done for him."

As Helen did not wish to hear a word of the thanks, she endeavoured to rally, and tried to speak of her grief in thus losing Mrs. Neville, and of her hope of their soon meeting again.

"Only think, we have never met since Aubrey's gay ball," said Mrs. Neville. "Was it not successful?" asked the lady with wonderful inconsideration.

Mr. Bohun felt her levity, and asked so kindly after Mr. Latimer that Helen was saved a reply.

He was the first to suggest that they ought to end their visit, but Mrs. Neville would not go until Helen had promised often to write to her.

“ You must write to me Emmeline,” said Helen, “ for what can I tell you from here, except that I miss you. Remember how dull you thought it when first you came among us, you brought all our events, and with you they will all depart.”

“ I shall certainly write to you my dear Helen,” answered Mrs. Neville. “ I am very idle, but there is no fear of my not writing to you, for Aubrey will have so much pleasure in franking the letters that he will be sure to remind me of writing.”

Helen felt that Mr. Bohun's eyes were fixed upon her as Mrs. Neville said this, she felt

that she must exert herself, and she laughingly said, “ But Emmeline I am vain enough to expect you to remember me yourself, so that I shall only regard an unfranked letter as a proof that you do not forget me.”

“ Dearest Helen who can forget you,” said Mrs. Neville embracing her. “ We shall never cease to talk of you, shall we Aubrey?”

“ I wish I were sure of being remembered as I shall ever remember Miss Molesworth,” said Mr. Bohun seriously.

In a moment they were gone.

“ It may be only gallantry,” said Helen to herself, “ but *he* at any rate has feeling.”

## CHAPTER XII.

HARTLEBURY AT PEACE. MR. BOHUN  
IN LONDON.

THE most grateful labour of love is to watch the daily progress towards health of a loved friend, whom we have tended through an almost hopeless illness. To note each day that slight increase of strength which is imperceptible to others,—to listen to tones no longer tremulous,—to gaze on the smile which speaks of

the thankfulness of the heart,—and to share all the joy of returning health, are indeed rich rewards for all the cares and sympathies of friendship.

And this happiness was now Helen Molesworth's. Each day Mrs. Latimer grew stronger, and more able to express her gratitude and her affection for her young nurse. Mrs. Boscawen, at the time of her mother's sudden attack, had herself been too ill to come to her, and therefore during the whole of Mrs. Latimer's illness, all the duties of a daughter had devolved on Helen.

In the performance of those duties she became more satisfied with herself, and as the hope of Mrs. Latimer's recovery gradually grew into a certainty, she recovered her wonted gaiety and cheerfulness, and in time

she could even see old Mr. Gainsborough, almost without a blush.

With Mr. Bohun had vanished all the unusual excitement of the neighbourhood; all the visiting and the carousing was over, every thing was again quiet. Even George Gainsborough had been for some time away. Peaceful Hartlebury seemed itself again. Arthur Latimer yielded to the full enjoyment of Helen's society, she had become dearer to him than ever, and no intruders were at hand to awaken him to caution. He felt that he was happy—he staid not to ask why. He and Helen resumed their old walks and rides, and village visits; and he endeavoured to forget the last disagreeable year. But sometimes, in despite of himself, his thoughts would revert to Mr. Bohun. He could not help occasionally specu-



lating on the terms on which he had parted with Helen: but Helen seemed happy and gay—ought he not then to be satisfied?

She, like himself, appeared to enjoy the peace which had returned to Hartlebury; for when her father urged her to go for awhile away from home to seek change of air and scene, after all her exertions, she would always playfully answer, “Dear Papa, where can I find a greater change than I have here? Look at dear Hartlebury now, and think what it was two months ago.” Mr. Molesworth always hated moving from home, so the matter was soon settled between them.

In the meantime they often heard of their late companions. Mrs. Neville was wonderfully punctual in her correspondence, and her letters were all of Aubrey Bohun. Mr

Bohun himself sometimes wrote to Mr. Molesworth,—the avowed object of his letters was to obtain some information respecting the administration of the Poor Laws in the immediate vicinity of Bohun and Hartlebury, but he did not attempt to conceal from his friends that he was eager to avail himself of any excuse to remind them of him. He assured them how desirous he was to escape from the crowds around him, and that he should deem himself the happiest man in the world, on the day he was again admitted at Hartlebury.

On Mr. Bohun's arrival in London, he became the object of universal attention. He was soon surrounded, and was more courted and caressed than in the days of his gay youth. The suddenness of his return had awakened curiosity respecting the secrecy of

his retreat; everybody had some solution to offer of the mystery,—he was the subject of general speculation. He was the fashion.—Brilliant beauties, who had sought consolation in a coronet for Mr. Bohun's former indifference; and younger, and not less charming fair ones, who hoped now to find him more willing to be won, and leaders of all parties who were equally eager to secure him, all sought his notice. His election had already made a great sensation among the politicians; there was no saying what he might be. Every body was interested about him—every body seemed to think that he had been so long out of England, that without their advice he could not be successful, he had as many advisers as acquaintances.

“My dear Mr. Bohun,” said the old fool,

“Allow me to advise you—excuse the liberty I take, but age you know gives us a privilege. I have seen too many great men in my time.—I have a high idea of your powers,—no one can have a higher;—I am sure you will equal the greatest: but take my advice, do not be in a hurry to speak.—Feel your way first.—All great statesmen have waited a season or two before they spoke,—waited till they caught the tone of the house. Take my advice, do not be in a hurry to speak.”

“I say, Bohun, my good fellow,” said the young fool, “take my advice, don’t be in a hurry to speak,—wait till you catch the tone of the house.—I have known devilish clever fellows quite done up, by not waiting until they caught the tone of the house.”

Mr. Bohun’s answer to both was a bow.

He knew his own powers. Parliament met. The King's speech was discussed. In a crowded house, Aubrey Bohun arose. He spoke on our continental policy. He addressed the house without the slightest apparent nervousness, but with great mildness, and with an air that the dandies decided was perfectly gentlemanly—so they listened. The Tories listened because they were anxious to make out whether he belonged to them or not: and the Whigs listened because they were afraid of him. So Aubrey Bohun soon felt that he had a perfect command of the house.—Then he warmed with his subject—he described with energy the fame and power of England, as he had witnessed it spread over the continent, when he first went abroad ten years since. He drew a degrading image of what it would be in ten

years to come, if the blighting principles indicated in the Royal Speech were adhered to. He was fully master of his subject—he abounded in facts, and each fact was an epigram. The Treasury Bench writhed. It was not only the most successful debut ever made in that house, but the most brilliant oration that had for years been heard within its walls. And from this night he spoke in all great debates, and ever with the same success, for he was equally powerful in attack or defence.

There were others, as we must all remember, in the opening of this reformed Parliament, who were induced by his success to follow his example, and who made most extraordinary failures. Their friends say that it was all owing to their speaking before they caught the tone of the house, but they are

all wrong,—the mistake was not in speaking too soon, but in speaking at all.

One morning the breakfast table at Hartlebury was enlivened by an unusually long letter from Mrs. Neville. It contained an account more dazzling than ever of Aubrey Bohun. Helen read it to her father; and while he was occupied with the newspaper, she re-read it to herself. Mr. Molesworth suddenly looked up, and he saw Helen with a most serious countenance, studying Mrs. Neville's epistle.

“What are you thinking of Helen?” he asked, “is not Mr. Bohun eloquent enough to please you?”

Helen started from her reverie, and slightly blushing said, “Indeed, papa, I was just thinking that we really have no reason to be ashamed of our Fanchester hero.”

“I did not know that you ever thought that you had,” said Mr. Molesworth, with a scrutinizing glance.

Helen made no answer, and he returned to his paper.

“Papa!” said Helen, rather suddenly, after some minutes of silence.

“Well, Helen,” said her father, again looking up.

“Papa!” again commenced Helen, —  
“Mr. Bohun is certainly a very extraordinary person.”

“Fortunately he is, my dear,” answered Mr. Molesworth; “it would be awkward if many resembled him: we should live always in a state of confusion.”

“Should you not very much like to know what he did with himself abroad?”



“Perhaps his adventures would disappoint us.”

“Why?”

“They might destroy all our romantic ideas of his extraordinary qualities, they might prove him a very ordinary sort of person.”

“No papa, I am sure that you do not think so—you must feel that Mr. Bohun could not have passed ten years in a common-place manner.”

“Are you interested to know, Helen?” asked her father, with more seriousness.

“Oh! no,” answered Helen, a little confused, “it is merely a woman’s curiosity.”

“If that be all,” said Mr. Molesworth, “the discovery may safely be left to woman’s wit.”

“Not to mine,” said Helen. After a pause

she added, with more frankness, "Would it not, Papa, be satisfactory to know something of the past life of one with whom we have thus glided into intimacy?"

"You are right, my child," said Mr. Molesworth, "and I confess to you I have long desired this knowledge, but have sought it in vain."

"There is one person who could tell us much," said Helen.

"Who is that?" asked her father.

"Mr. George Gainsborough."

Mr. Molesworth remained for a few minutes plunged in thought, he then turned again to his paper; but he seemed uneasy, and his eye often wandered from its columns to his daughter. But Helen was now at the window, speculating on the weather. This was the third

morning that it had rained without ceasing, and her anxiety for a bright sun, and a clear sky, seemed somewhat to have lessened her curiosity—to unveil the dark clouds that hung around their mysterious neighbour.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GEORGE GAINSBOROUGH'S HOPES REVIVE.

ABOUT noon the clouds broke, the sun came forth—the horizon cleared. Mr. Molesworth invited his daughter to ride with him. It was one of those mornings towards the close of March that give us the first indication that Winter is leaving us, and that the beautiful Spring is about again to gladden the earth. The trees were yet leafless; but every branch

was covered with bursting buds. The air was mild and soft, and as our companions pursued their way by the banks of the river, they allowed their horses to drop into a walk as they gazed on the changes which the last day or two had produced. The meadows looked green with the springing grass, and the daisies were appearing, and in the hedges, on the hazel and the nut, the long pendant blossom had opened by the side of its delicate pink companion, and the dark foliage of the yew was enlivened by its ivory flowers. And in every sheltered spot patches of snow-drops and tufts of primroses were seen.

Mr. Molesworth and his daughter rode on in silence; they were somewhat serious, and Helen was meditating on the many changes which had occurred since last she watched

these same trees bursting into life. A horseman appeared in the distance : he hastened his pace when he discerned them.

“ Papa ! ” said Helen, suddenly, and starting in her saddle. “ Here is Mr. George Gainsborough.”

Mr. George Gainsborough advanced smilingly to greet them, little aware how much of their thoughts he was at that moment occupying. He had just returned home, and had as usual much to say. He enquired after Mrs. Latimer, and was very complimentary to Miss Molesworth on the successful result of her exertions, and was eager to learn that she had not suffered from what he characterized as her amiable attentions. He talked a great deal, but he made no allusion to any of the important events which had of late disturbed

them, though he had never seen Helen since the night of the ball. Helen's thoughts, however, were wholly of the past, and she was silent and constrained, but her father's unwonted loquacity fully covered her want of conversation. Mr. Molesworth seldom took the trouble of talking much to any body, merely for the sake of conversing, and more especially to George Gainsborough, whose flowery style he considered intended for the womankind; but on this occasion he was very communicative. The truth was that it struck Mr. Molesworth that it was necessary to encourage some slight intimacy with a man from whom he desired to obtain such important information.

The following day Mr. George Gainsborough called at the hall. Miss Molesworth was with Mrs. Latimer, but he spent half an

hour with Mr. Molesworth, who at the conclusion of the visit invited him to dinner on the next day.

The most honest are apt unconsciously to fall into a softer and more ingratiating manner than usual, when they address those of whom they require a service, and so it was at this time with Mr. Molesworth, when he gave his invitation to George Gainsborough. He was not the least aware of it himself, but his kindness was not lost on the object of it.

George Gainsborough's designs on Miss Molesworth had been abandoned, but they were not forgotten. He had yielded to his unfortunate destiny, he had yielded to one whom he detested, but who, alas! he had long fatally experienced he could not resist. From the moment that Mr. Bohun had so openly



declared to him his intentions with regard to Helen Molesworth, George Gainsborough had withdrawn from the contest. He stood apart, a gay, and apparently an unconcerned, spectator. He felt that she could never be his, but he did not resign her without a struggle—he longed for the consolation of revenge. It was that feeling that prompted him on the night of the ball to play with Helen's excited suspicions, and to infuse into her mind doubts of Mr. Bohun's sincerity. More he dared not do, but he left that little to work its way. He quitted Hartlebury with the hope that he had converted her suspicions into certainty.

But to-day other feelings arose. Certainly Mr. Molesworth had greeted him with unusual warmth. He could not be deceived in his manner, and then so immediate an invitation

to dine with them, and alone, seemed as if they sought a renewal of their earlier intimacy. Was it possible that what he had intended should destroy his rival should have produced a double effect, and worked good for himself? It was not improbable that Miss Molesworth should have communicated her conversation with him to her father, who perhaps had already shared her suspicions, and they might both regard him as a friend, whose timely caution had saved them from much future pain.

As he thus meditated, his passions roused. Why now should he not make a desperate effort to win her? He could trust the Molesworths: whatever he communicated to Mr. Molesworth under the seal of secrecy, he was confident that he would never divulge; he

might venture to tell him much—why should he not tell him all—all that concerned Mr. Bohun — and all told, Aubrey Bohun and Helen Molesworth were eternally separated.

Thus mused George Gainsborough through that day and night, until his excited passions yearned for the morrow, which was to gratify his vengeance, and perhaps lay the foundations of his future triumph.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MYSTERY DISCLOSED.

ON the morrow, in the gayest spirits, George Gainsborough entered the drawing-room of Hartlebury Hall. During dinner he amused his companions with innumerable anecdotes of his continental adventures, gay and wonderful histories, which had greatly enlivened

them on his first coming amongst them, but which somehow or other had lain dormant since Mr. Bohun's arrival.

He talked of nothing but Greece, and each moment there seemed to Helen an opportunity to lead to the explanation which she so much desired. She often looked at her father, and caught his eye; he too appeared to think as she did. She seized therefore the first opportunity to quit the room, that her presence might prove no hindrance to their conversation.

In the drawing-room, she drew her chair to the fire, and with her feet on the fender, her fancy was busy in speculating on what, after all, George Gainsborough could have to tell. An hour past, and yet they came not, he must be telling all. Two hours had elapsed,

when Mr. Molesworth entered the room and alone.

“ Dear Papa, have you the least idea how late it is,” said Miss Molesworth as her father entered. “ Where is Mr. Gainsborough ? ”

“ He has gone home,” replied Mr. Molesworth in a very serious tone, and he began poking the fire.

“ Gone home ! ”

“ Yes, gone home, Helen,” continued Mr. Molesworth after a momentary pause. “ Helen I wish to speak a word to you.” He seated himself by her side, he took his daughter’s hand, held it for a moment and then kissed it.

“ Dearest Papa ! ” said Helen rather alarmed. “ You are very serious ! What has happened ? ”

“Nothing, nothing I hope that should make us unhappy, though much that should make us serious.”

“Oh! tell me!”

“My own Helen, you must be aware that your felicity in life is ever the chief object of my care.”

“Each instant of my existence proves that truth,” replied the daughter.

“I have indeed,” continued Mr. Molesworth, “no other thought but you. Providence has willed that our family name, an ancient and a time-honored name, should apparently become extinct. I do not murmur Helen; I hope my child, that under any circumstances I should not murmur, but when I remember that the same beneficent Being that has denied me what some fathers would

deem the crowning blessing of existence—a son, should have compensated for this deprivation by yielding me a daughter, like yourself, Helen, I cannot talk of murmuring; I can only think of gratitude.”

“Dear father!” What can have happened, thought Helen,—surely, surely George Gainsborough is not about to make me a proposal.

“My child,” continued Mr. Molesworth, “if you were unhappy, I should die.”

“Papa! dearest Papa; am I not the happiest person in the world? Do you not love me? What, what more can I desire?”

“I love you sweetest, yes I love you,” and he placed his arm round her waist, “and I am myself happy in your love. You are all in the world to me Helen, all, all. I can have



no other thought but you. But with you Helen it is different. You are young, the world is yet before you, you are beautiful, you have all worldly blessings. It is impossible that your feelings can be concentrated in mine, as mine are in yours. Were it possible, it is not desirable. It would be selfish, it would be wicked in me to desire it. Long, long my dear Helen, have I accustomed myself to our probable separation. Often, often have I pondered over it. I acknowledge its necessity. My mind is reconciled to the bereavement, and provided it secure your felicity, I am prepared to behold in this incident only a fresh blessing, and an occasion for renewed gratefulness."

"Dearest Papa," said Helen, and the tears stole down her cheek. "Talk not of such

misery. Why should we ever part? What should occasion our separation."

"Your marriage Helen."

"My marriage Sir!"

"Ay!"

"I do not contemplate such a circumstance."

"Helen," said Mr. Molesworth, "do not deceive me. You, I firmly believe, have never deceived me. Yet women are artful, and on this subject even delicacy prompts deception, and as some think would authorise it."

"Oh! believe me Sir. I speak from my very heart. I do not contemplate marriage."

Mr. Molesworth looked at her very earnestly and then said, "Helen, there should be no secrets between us. I am your best friend, and you have no mother. Think, think twice of what you are saying."

“It is unnecessary. My conscience is clear.”

“Mr. Bohun?” said her father with an enquiring air.

“Is to me nothing Sir. I will not deceive you, I will not attempt to conceal that I am sensible to the attentions, or even the qualities, of such a man as Mr. Bohun. But the first I have ever considered lightly of, and for the second — believe me I see much to dread in Mr. Bohun as well as to admire.”

Mr. Molesworth rose and walked up and down the room. Suddenly he turned towards Helen, and taking her in his arms, “My daughter, my dear daughter, pardon the anxiety of a parent, of a father who adores you. My daughter, my dear daughter, you are not deceiving me?”

“ Oh ! my father, you reproach me ! ” said Helen sobbing. “ I could not deceive you. Besides indeed Papa, you are here a little mistaken. Mr. Bohun’s gallantry has not misled me ; let it not mislead you. He is a practised man of the world ; I do not doubt his sincerity when he affects to admire me, or any other pretty woman with whom he is thrown into contact, but I look upon him as a man who has no other object in life but to gratify his selfism, which he styles sentiment. I interested him here : some one else, I doubt not, interests him now. Indeed, Papa, I have more respect for myself than you believe ; I am not so easily won as you imagine.”

“ Sweet child, speak on.”

“ I am too happy at home, to risk such felicity, for anything so uncertain as the affec-

tion of a man of whose character I know nothing. Besides, Mr. Bohun is exactly the sort of person of whom I cannot help fancying there is much to know. Nothing would induce me at this moment to become his wife. But, Papa, how he would laugh if he could overhear us, for I dare say he has as much an intention to offer himself to Miss Gainsborough as to myself!"

"You are wrong Helen," said her father. "You are wrong. Men trifle with women, but not with their own sex. Mr. Bohun admires you, I doubt not he is prepared to offer to unite his destiny with yours, for he has spoken to me on the subject, and I referred him to you. The illness of Mrs. Latimer could alone have prevented his coming to an explanation with you, and he must be very much changed in-

deed, if this crisis do not occur immediately on his return."

"You surprise me, you overwhelm me. Papa, you know my feelings. They can alone regulate my conduct. My affections are disengaged. I admire Mr. Bohun, I frankly confess that in time I might be induced to love him. But love him I do not at present, nay, although I feel ashamed at yielding to such unjustifiable suspicions, if I have any feeling for Mr. Bohun at present it is Fear. Yes, Papa, I cannot resist the extraordinary, perhaps the unfounded, the unjust conviction, but I feel assured that there is something about Mr. Bohun not right. With all his fascinating qualities, I fear him."

"Continue to fear him," said her father,

in a deep, low voice. "He is a villain!"

Helen started, turned pale, nearly shrieked. "Good God! Sir."

"I repeat my word. Bohun is a villain. Let us speak no more upon this subject. As you value my honour and my happiness, let no word or look of yours at any time reveal to him your feeling. When you told me you did not love him, it was the happiest hour of my life, sweet, the happiest, happiest hour. When I first kissed that smiling face, girl, and pressed those little lips, I never felt more joy. I might be silent, but you will see him again, for circumstances, uncontrollable circumstances, will not allow me suddenly to terminate our acquaintance. You are safe now: God, who has given us so many mercies, be praised for this

his chief. You are safe now ; and for the future  
I guard you. Know then that Mr. Bohun *is*  
*married !*"



## CHAPTER XV.

### A PAINFUL INTERVIEW.

THIS fatal secret very differently affected Mr. Molesworth and his daughter. The one could think only of the heinousness of the crime, the other dwelt alone on his gratitude for their escape. That Helen's suspicions and caution would in time have yielded to the seduction of Mr. Bohun's manners, Mr Molesworth never

doubted, and he thanked God for their deliverance from so eminent a peril, as he each day thought that he might have lived to see his darling child the victim of a heartless sensualist. But Helen was overwhelmed, she shrank with horror from the dark scenes of crime that were opened to her, she trembled to think that she had held intimate communion with one so hardened in guilt. Sometimes her pure mind, eager to discredit what was so painful to believe, would endeavour to seek relief in the hope that George Gainsborough had himself been deceived, but then her father, on whose judgment she entirely relied, had heard all the detail and had never doubted the truth of the story. True therefore she feared it must be, and then came the overwhelming thought that she must soon meet Mr. Bohun. It wanted but a week

or two to Easter, when he was expected by his enthusiastic constituents. She became sorrowful and unhappy. So heavily did the anticipation of this evil press on her, that at night it was hours before she could sleep, and in the morning she woke faint and sick at heart. At times she tried to solace herself with the idea that he would not visit Bohun, which was at so great a distance from the metropolis, for so short a vacation. But she could not long indulge this delusion, for almost every day she was condemned to hear of some new engagement which the indefatigable Mr. Chace was authorised to make with the good people of Fanchester, who were eager to celebrate the visit of their hero, by many feasts and many speeches.

No, she felt that she must prepare to meet him, to receive him as if he were still their

friend, and alas! to listen to his professions as if they were not degrading and insulting to her. She endeavoured to fortify her mind for such a meeting. And I doubt not, for I have a great opinion of her good sense, that if she had had due notice of the coming of such a visitor, if Sideboard's pompous announcement had been preceded by the barking of the dogs, and the ringing of divers bells, she would have acquitted herself with tolerable composure. But the interview came to pass after quite a different fashion.

While her mind was for ever fixed upon this painful subject, she could not forget George Gainsborough, and, strange to say, her dread of seeing Mr. Bohun scarcely exceeded her dislike to encounter him. An indescribable feeling overcame her in his presence, he

seemed mixed up with the dark villainies he had unfolded, and she blushed that he should be the partner of the secret that agitated her bosom.

One morning, about a week before the time Mr. Bohun was expected to arrive at the Castle, Helen had been spending some hours with Mrs. Latimer, when, suddenly remembering a book she had promised to lend her, she hastened home to fetch it. She hurried across the hall into the drawing-room, where she had placed it the evening before. She opened the door, Mr. Bohun was sitting at the table reading. He looked up, he flew to meet her, and as he took her hand, he said, "You are surprised to find me here, but I could not be turned away from Hartlebury. I have been endeavouring

as patiently as I could to wait your return."

Surprised indeed Helen appeared. She turned quite pale, and she could not speak. In fact it must, I fear, be admitted that our heroine fairly lost her presence of mind. If Mr. Bohun had been a coxcomb, he would have ascribed her agitation to the unexpected pleasure of seeing him, but Aubrey Bohun's quick observation saved him from the delusion of such flattery, and in a moment he detected that her agitation arose rather from consternation than joy.

The first moment of reunion is perhaps the moment most fraught with sentiment, in the intercourse of either love or friendship, and there is nothing which a susceptible mind so actutely feels as to be received with coldness,

where the grief of parting had been alleviated by the interchange of kindness and affection. All the warmth of feeling with which Mr. Bohun had greeted Helen, was suddenly repressed, and he dropped her hand almost with the promptitude with which he had seized it. Miss Molesworth endeavoured to express her surprise at seeing him, and very incoherently informed him that she was not aware of his arrival at Bohun. She advanced to the fire, and observed that it was a very cold day, and then she sought the usual resource of nervous persons—she stirred it. She rang the bell to desire that Mr. Molesworth should be sought for in the grounds, and then, trusting that these few moments had restored her composure, and feeling all the necessity of exerting herself, she turned to Mr. Bohun, and made

some very rapid enquiries respecting Mrs. Neville.

The manner of her visitor did not aid her, a dignified, but gentle expression of sorrow had succeeded to the gaiety and warmth with which he had first met her ; his eyes were fixed upon her, and he seemed to wait until she chose the tone and subject of their discourse.

Helen felt that she must speak again, that he would not speak, and that she must exert herself. But every subject was alike, full of danger. She could not speak of the Latimers, their name was too intimately connected with the last meeting between herself and Mr. Bohun. As for the Gainsboroughs, she felt that she could not articulate their name. And then his own success which had wont to be



made by Mrs. Neville, in all their conversations, the eternal subject of anticipatory triumph, why could she not speak of that now that had so far surpassed all their imaginings? To withhold her sympathy in his triumph was as ill-bred as it was unfeeling: but what words of commendation could she use, that would not re-kindle his warmth, that would not lead to the dreaded subject? She again sought relief in renewed inquiries concerning her friend.

“I hope,” she said, “Emmeline has not suffered from the fatigue of her gay life. Notwithstanding all her engagements, she has been very good to me.”

“I fear you may have found her troublesome,” he answered, “but Emmeline is more constant”—here he hesitated.

More constant than I am, he means, thought Helen.

“More constant,” he continued, “than perhaps you would give her credit for. That she has faithfully kept one promise to you, I can vouch, she has never ceased to talk of you.”

“She is very good,” almost sighed Helen. “Her letters were full of animation, but you can guess,” she added with a vain attempt to smile, “that she had a very interesting subject. You will find, I assure you, your friends at Fanchester in a state of renewed enthusiasm. Mrs. Escott says—” Helen suddenly stopped, Mr. Bohun’s eyes were fixed upon her, and seemed to say, “How can you at such a moment so bitterly insult me, as to retail to me the praises of a silly old woman?” So at least

thought Helen's conscience, and it must be confessed that hitherto, during the whole of this interview, she had appeared the guilty party : he looked composed and dignified, and full of feeling, and she was embarrassed and agitated.

“ I am glad,” he mildly said, “ that you are not ashamed of me. Still supported by Mrs. Escott, perhaps you do not regret all that your kindness effected for me. Shall I find all my friends here ? ” he suddenly asked, “ is Gainsborough here ? ”

Helen's colour mounted to her temples, at this simple question, and she rang the bell with such violence to enquire if Sideboard had found her father, that the bell - rope fell at her feet.

Mr. Bohun continued silent, he was re-

volving a great matter. He had ridden over to Hartlebury that morning with no determined purpose of explaining his sentiments to Miss Molesworth, he had thought only of the felicity of being again in her presence. He had hastened to meet her, gay and animated, he found her confused and spiritless. A few moments of thought determined him, for his impatient spirit could ill brook this.

And so as Sideboard retired, with the unsatisfactory answer that might have been anticipated, Mr. Bohun rose from his seat and taking a place on the sofa by the side of Helen he said in the softest tone :

“ Miss Molesworth, tell me why am I so unhappy as to have lost your friendship.”

Helen started at this frank query.

“ You were, I am sure, my friend when

I left you, tell me what has happened to deprive me of my greatest happiness."

"You are too rapid in your conclusions," said Helen, who endeavoured to repel a charge she could not confute. "For three months you have not seen me but for these five minutes: you cannot know anything about me."

"In friendship and in—love we count by sensations and not by minutes, Miss Molesworth. We cannot reason, we can only feel. I have sighed for this hour of meeting. Perhaps then my disappointment may have arisen only from my over excited expectation. Let me then breathe to you those hopes I have long so ardently indulged. Let me tell you that I love you, let me dare to ask for your love."

The fatal words she so dreaded to hear were uttered. She scarcely waited until he ceased to speak before she exclaimed, "Oh! Mr. Bohun, do not speak of that, indeed we are not fitted for one another. What do you know of me: think how short has been our acquaintance, how serious is what you ask."

"I cannot need to know more of you than I do," he calmly answered. "You have rather stated your objections to me. My dearest Miss Molesworth," and here he took her hand, "what is there you can desire to know of me, of my past life and feelings, that I would not willingly entrust to one whose charity so tempers her purity. Only let me hear from your lips that this day I have deceived myself—let me hope for the future."

His manner, which had hitherto been mild

and dispassionate, suddenly assumed a more passionate tone, and it roused all Helen's feelings of injury. She drew her hand hastily from his, she covered her face with both her hands, and she shuddered as she said "Oh! Mr. Bohun, can you say this to me!"

Her horror was but too apparent.

"It is indeed harsh in you to believe me unworthy of all hope," said Mr. Bohun with some emotion. "But I feel that there must be here some painful misconception. But you are agitated now, I will not further distress you, at present I will only say farewell, and hope that your feelings are happier than mine are at this moment."

So saying he bowed and quitted the room, but as he quitted it a terrible expression came over his countenance. He bit his lip, a scowl

settled on his face ; for a moment he looked the impersonation of some evil demon. One moment, in profound thought, he remained upon the hall steps ; then mounting his horse, he galloped away.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### A FRIENDLY CONVERSATION.

HE galloped away in the direction of Oakfield, nor did he curb his pace until the neat gable ends and pointed windows of Mr. Gainsborough's residence were in sight. Within a hundred yards of the gate he perceived a horseman advancing in his direction. It was George Gainsborough whom he had not seen since his return. Mr. Bohun reined in his steed.

“ How do you do Gainsborough ?”

“ How do you do Bohun ?”

“ I hope your family are quite well. I was just going to return your visit. I was sorry I had not arrived when you called yesterday.”

“ Ours was the misfortune.”

“ What are you going to do with yourself ?”

“ I was about to let my steed take its own direction.”

“ I have some orders to give at the castle which I omitted this morning, I should like to return there at once. Have you any objection to be my companion ?”

“ I am entirely at your service.”

“ Come on then.”—So saying Mr. Bohun turned his horse’s head, and the gentlemen in company proceeded in the direction of the castle.

After proceeding along the high road about a quarter of a mile, they turned up a winding green lane which here divided the Bohun property from the demesne of Oakfield. On one side were open fields, on the other some recent plantations on which Mr. Gainsborough senior much prided himself. Conversation was not very fluent. Mr. Bohun asked a great many questions, but did not seem much interested in his companion's answers. He was courteous, and every now and then appeared to make an effort to be companionly, but on the whole he was distraight, and had not the invitation proceeded from himself, George Gainsborough would have considered that he was in the way.

About half a mile up the lane, they arrived at a small piece of waste land, on which was a cot-

tage in no very good repute among the magistrates. It was a Tom and Jerry shop, and kept by a rather lawless character and suspected poacher. When they had passed this dwelling about one hundred yards and again entered the lane, a very pretty young woman with a child in her arms met them. She was the wife of this cottager : she curtsied as she passed. Mr. Bohun, smiled and seemed inclined to stop, but Mr. Bohun who appeared moody, gave her only a cold nod. The woman seemed very mortified.

“ I detest to be ill-natured,” instantly said Mr. Bohun, as it were talking to himself and he turned his horse. The woman came back. George Gainsborough stopped his horse, but did not return with his companion. Mr.

Bohun was about half a dozen yards from George Gainsborough as he spoke to the woman, who was looking back as he turned and immediately met him. Mr. Bohun leant his head down and spoke to her about two minutes. She smiled and rather blushed. Mr. Bohun in a loud and gay tone wished her good morning, and then returning to George Gainsborough said "Come for a canter," and so proceeding at a rapid rate, they soon reached Bohun castle.

Dismounting, Mr. Bohun led the way to his private apartment, ushering in his guest who walked into the room before him and immediately threw himself on a sofa. Mr. Bohun turning the key of the apartment, planted himself before the fire. He was very pale and his lips quivered as he said in a very

calm voice and in Greek, Gainsborough, "you have betrayed me."

George Gainsborough started from the sofa, as if instead of that still small voice he had listened to the last trump. He started from the sofa, and stared at Mr. Bohun with a countenance of indescribable consternation.

"Betrayed you," he at length exclaimed, for Mr. Bohun would not again speak, "What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say. You have betrayed me."

"Who says so?"

"Only one person could tell me. It is unnecessary for me to mention that person's name."

George Gainsborough was silent.

"Gainsborough," said Mr. Bohun, "have not

I told you a thousand times it is in vain to try to deceive me. If you have struggled with me more than once; you have ever been defeated. Madman, will you never learn to be wise? Is my magnanimity only to make you more rash? Yes! Sir, you have betrayed me, and I, Sir, I will bear this no more. I will take you like this vase, [and Mr. Bohun took from the mantel-piece a precious vase of porcelain] I will take you like this vase, and shiver you to pieces," and he dashed the vessel on the hearth into a thousand fragments.

George Gainsborough folded his arms, and leant against the wall silent, but determined. A dogged expression came over his countenance as he said in a subdued voice, but with deliberate utterance, "Tyrant, I defy you."

Mr. Bohun sprang forward like a tiger

and seized Gainsborough by the neck. He dragged him from the wall, seemed to toss his powerful opponent in the air like a puppet, and then dashing him back to his old position, paced the chamber with awful strides.

“ You are the only man who dare do this,” said George Gainsborough very coolly.

“ Silence, wretch,” said Mr. Bohun.

“ Aubrey Bohun, I will not be silent,” replied George Gainsborough. “ You deem me in your power, but I defy it. Death is more acceptable to me than life upon such terms as these. You accuse me of betraying you. If to save a beautiful and an innocent victim of your lust be treason, I glory in it. You boast of your triumphs over me; God knows you have triumphed. You have crossed my path once, once you have blighted all my prospects



and crushed all my hopes, but I will avenge both Alexina and myself, and as there is a God in heaven, Helen Molesworth never shall be yours."

"Liar, robber, assassin, is it thou, thou gallows bird, is it thou that thus speakest to Bohun? I crush thy hopes, thou reptile! I won Alexina, as I will win Helen. Am I to suffer for your ambitious fancies? She saw me, and she loved me. What cared I for your plighted troth with the old bandit her father! Shall a thing like you stand in my way! A thing that wore my livery, my hireling, my slave!"

"Oh! that I had a sword," said George Gainsborough.

"I am not *sleeping*, Gainsborough," said Mr. Bohun with a fiend-like sneer, and suddenly

stopping in his course, throwing a glance at Gainsborough, under which he quailed.

“ Do you recognise this, wretch,” he continued in an awful tone, and he tore open his clothes, and shewed upon his breast a scar—Gainsborough involuntarily placed his hand to his sight.

“ I pardoned you : Love, disappointed passion was your excuse,” continued Bohun in a more moderate and measured tone. “ I am the most charitable of men, and willing to believe anything — ’Tis pity for the honour of our species, Sir, that I was your creditor as well as your rival, and that the blow which avenged your *passion* might also have discharged your *debts*.”

Gainsborough shuddered.

“ There is nothing like business,” continued

Mr. Bohun after a short pause, but never for a moment taking his eye off his companion's.

“ Grant you have succeeded, grant that Helen Molesworth, through your arts, is not mine ; grant that my revelations as to your real character and conduct are not credited ; grant that my assassin is acquitted by the merciful laws of our enlightened country. How does he mean to act ? The bond, the bond, the thing, ‘ I’ll have my bond.’ Will your father’s miserable savings discharge it ? ”

George Gainsborough came forward and fell upon his knees. “ I am in your power Bohun, I know that you are merciful, that you are generous. Dictate your terms.”

“ They are simple—Remove, utterly remove the evil impression that you have created, and the day that I marry Helen Molesworth the

bond is yours, and I allow you a thousand a year for life. Nay ! I wish to be generous—Go, go and share it, if you like, with Alexina.”

“ Oh,” groaned George Gainsborough, “ name not your wife.”

“ Wife, Sir,” exclaimed Bohun, “ but it is but fair—Yes, my wife is certainly at your service.”

“ But how can I remove the impression ?” enquired George Gainsborough almost in despair.

“ In one way only,” answered Bohun very coolly. “ By proclaiming yourself the villain which you are. Take Mr. Molesworth aside and inform him that you love his daughter to desperation, that in the madness of jealousy you have invented the most infamous calumnies respecting the individual whom you considered

your fortunate rival, that all you repeated is utterly false, that you feel it but justice to me to confess that my character is pure as undriven snow. Remorse must be your excuse. Believe me when once you have screwed your mind to the sticking point, you will not find more difficulty in telling this lie than the thousand others in which you have indulged."

"I cannot," said George Gainsborough.

"'Tis an awkward business, no doubt," replied Mr. Bohun: "but in your situation a man can only balance inconveniences. The simple question is this,—do you prefer being utterly ruined in fortune and character to an old man and his daughter knowing you to be a scoundrel? For, remember, the subject is too delicate ever to become notorious. The Molesworths will naturally communicate with no one but

me, and I shall take care for both our sakes that the subject is never again mooted. There is no need, after this exposure, that you should even leave this neighbourhood, if you care to stay. Whatsoever the Molesworths think, I shall take care to uphold you. You know I have no antipathies, as long as I gain my ends. You will always find a welcome here."

George Gainsborough continued silent. He seemed plunged in thought. "Well!" continued Mr. Bohun, "take time to consider. I do not wish to hurry you. In the meantime I will smoke a pipe. Perhaps you will follow my example. According to our old enemies the 'Turks' opinion, 'tis a practice which very much assists reflection."

"Bohun," said George Gainsborough, "I confess it is in vain to struggle with you. You

have conquered—By to-morrow I pledge myself that Mr. Molesworth shall call upon you, and a satisfactory explanation shall take place—may you be happy! I make no terms, I trust to your generosity.”

“It is what no one ever trusted to in vain,” was the answer, and George Gainsborough quitted the apartment.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A CONSULTATION.

GEORGE Gainsborough returned to Oakfield for dinner, but his want of appetite very much discomposed his mother. He pleaded indisposition, and indeed confessed himself, as the evening drew on, so very unwell, that he retired to his own room about eight o'clock, and locking his door, gave orders that he should on no account be disturbed.



The bed-chamber of George Gainsborough was on the ground floor : without difficulty you stepped out into the garden. He withdrew the curtain, and, opening the window, examined the sky. It was a fair but clouded night. He stood for some moments in reverie, then taking his cloak, which was hanging up, he enveloped himself in it, put on a small Grecian skull cap, which allowed him to envelope his head in the cape of his cloak, and very quietly stepped forth, closing the curtain and the window, but leaving his lamp burning.

It was two hours before he returned.—He re-entered very softly.—He was extremely pale. He took off his cloak, and perceiving that the lower part was wet, he wiped it with a towel before he hung it up in its old position. Then partly undressing, and putting on his dressing-

gown, he unlocked his door and rang the bell.

After answering his bell, the servant came into the drawing-room and said that Mr. George felt himself much worse indeed, that he had not succeeded in sleeping at all, as he had hoped; and that he thought it would be better to send for Mr. Trueman, who was the favourite medical attendant of all the neighbourhood. Mrs. Gainsborough and his sister immediately ran up to his room, full of anxiety and enquiries. They felt his pulse several times, and then they asked him many questions, and there they remained. Mr. Gainsborough, senior, occasionally joining them, until Mr. Trueman arrived. "I have such faith in Trueman," said Mrs. Gainsborough, "I declare, my love, I am never happy except when

Trueman is in the house. Somehow, I never feel secure without Trueman. I am sure my love, if I ever be ill away from Oakfield, I do not know what I shall do without Trueman."

"And I am sure my dear, I don't know what Trueman could do without us, for really I think that Oakfield is an annuity to him."

"Well my dear, no one can say the money is ill-spent."

Happy Mrs. Gainsborough! If the Catholic dame have her confessor, Protestantism has at least not robbed its female votaries of their apothecary!

Mr. Trueman arrived; and after having examined his patient, looked very serious.

"Felt very ill when he came home, eh?" said Mr. Trueman—Mrs. Gainsborough dwelling on every accent that fell from his inspired

lips.—“No appetite? Eat nothing?—Not a little chicken, not a very little?—only a potatoe?—bad things potatoes—part of a roasted potatoe—very bad things indeed, roasted potatoes, even part of a roasted potatoe will account for any thing.”

“Good gracious,” exclaimed Mrs. Gainsborough, “only think.”

“Not slept at all? No inclination to sleep? Has been lying quite still ever since eight o’clock, restless—very?—I thought so. Nothing makes a man more restless than eating roasted potatoes. Even a very small portion of a roasted potatoe will make a man very restless indeed. My dear Madam, I speak to you because you have a head for these matters. My dear Madam, beware of roasted potatoes!”

“I never will look upon one again,” said

Mrs. Gainsborough. But poor George, do you think it very serious indeed?"

"Very."

"Good God!"

"Fever, — decided fever. He must be blooded immediately."

"What can be the matter with him?" said Miss Gainsborough.

"I dare say he has caught cold," said his mother.

"Or over exerted himself," said the father.

"Ah! that election," said the mother. "I knew he would do too much, I always said he would do too much—but he was so interested for his friend Mr. Bohun. Good God! he grows paler and paler every minute—Salvolatile!"

"Vinegar!"

"Hot—hot!"

“ No, cold will do,” said Mr. Trueman.

“ Hot,—cold—anything—anything !”

But George Gainsborough did not faint, he rallied.

“ ’Tis indigestion,” whispered Mr. Trueman to Mrs. Gainsborough.

“ I have no doubt,” responded the lady.

“ ’Tis over exertion, my love,” whispered Gainsborough to his wife.

“ I should not wonder,” she replied.

“ ’Tis cold, mamma,” whispered the daughter.

“ Very likely, Harriet.”

“ He may have over exerted himself, and may have caught cold,” observed Trueman ;  
“ but no one can deny that he has eaten a roasted potatoe.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A CATASTROPHE.

It was a beautiful spring morning. The sun was rising in the light blue sky, and spangled the dewy grass and glittering hawthorns with drops of lustre. All was glad, sweet, and promising. The smoke went dancing from the cottage chimneys; the fields and hedges were full of odour; and it seemed that during the balmy night the fresh and vigorous buds had nearly struggled into blossom.

What a golden spring lit up our hearts last year! Lucky was that lover whose good genius destined him to breathe his vows under its influence. Lucky the wight who, fanned by its fragrant breath, wandered amid grey rocks and green woods, and listened to the sound of the cascade and the cuckoo.

Shall we have as bright, as glowing a season this year? Mayhap the sun will be as clear and warm, the light blue sky not less full of laughing echoes, the flowers not less sweet, the cuckoo not less constant! Ah! but the feelings which gilt refined gold, painted the lily, and threw a perfume o'er the violet, those wonderful, those delicate, those evanescent feelings—where will they be? I am married! I am a happy man.

Perfectly true! I am a happy man. I



do not repent the irreparable step. It has realized all my expectations. It was really a step that introduced me into Paradise. Nevertheless who can refrain from sighing after an existence of one long courtship.

It was a beautiful spring morning and a knacker's cart with two men in it stopped at the Tom and Jerry shop, on the small piece of waste land, which Mr. Bohun and Mr. George Gainsborough passed on their ride of the preceding day.

"Blow me tight," said the driver to his companion. "Blow me tight Thorp, if I mus'nt whet my whistle."

"I'll stand a pot with all my heart Jin, but don't let's go 'till after business. We shall lose the beasty now. Now a days there is *sich* a competition!"

Thus it appears that our respectable friends, Mr. Jin Flag, and Mr. Bully Thorp were on an agreeable mission to purchase a dead horse of a neighbouring farmer.

“Well, we won’t get out Thorp, but I’ll be blowed if I musn’t have a drop.”

“No sooner said than done. Here mistress, a pot of Chumfield.”

There came out of the house the same very pretty woman to whom Mr. Bohun had spoken yesterday.

“Here’s to your health Missus Thurston,” said Bully Thorp.

“Here’s to ye,” said Jin Flag, “and to your pretty eyes.”

The woman looked very much offended at this familiarity, tossed her head slightly, but did not condescend to answer.

“Hope no offence missus,” apologised Jin Flag.

“If I am to be offended by every low fellow who has a loose tongue, I should have enough to do,” was her answer.

“My eye!” said Bully Thorp, opening very wide the feature by which he wore.

“Wheugh!” whistled Jin Flag: “If that a’ynt a good one! Well, here’s the blunt, I s’pose you great folks like to be paid.”

The woman took the money in silence, and withdrew.

“Hehup!” said Jin Flag, as he flanked his steed. “Them Thurstons give themselves more airs than my grandmother’s tabby.”

They took their way up the lane. When they had proceeded about half a mile, the horse jibbed.

“Hehup,” said Jin Flag, “hehup! hehup! What can be the matter with the old girl! Hehup!”

But the mare would not budge.—With eye distended and nostril stiff, it was evident there was something obnoxious very near.

“It cannot be the smell of the beast,” said Bully Thorp.

“Fiddle-de-dee,” said Jin Flag, “hehup! What you won’t, won’t you! Hehup! Hehup! I say Thorp just get out and lead her a bit.”

Out jumped Bully Thorp, and ran to her head. “Why! here is somebody in the ditch, Jin, a drunken man in the ditch.”

“Thurston, or I’am a Dutchman,” responded Jin. “Give him a kick.”

Thorp went to the ditch, leant down, uttered a shriek, and, pale and panting,

tottered back, and leant upon the horse's back.

"Why, what's the matter with the man," exclaimed his companion. "Thorp, I say Thorp, Bully Thorp, why what's the matter? why don't speak, man!"

"O—h!" groaned Thorp.

"What's the matter?" again asked Jin.

"*Sich* a sight!" said Thorp, trembling from head to foot.

"Speak!"

"I can't—look."

Jin Flag jumped out and ran to the ditch.

"Lord, have mercy upon us!" exclaimed Jin Flag, falling on his knees with a face like a sheet. "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"Has't seen it?" said Thorp.

"O—h!" groaned Flag.

“Has’t seen it?”

“That I should live to see this day!”

“Come along,” said Thorp, “we must exert ourselves, we must examine the body. Come along. I won’t touch it without you. Oh! how glad I am it is the morning!”

Jin Flag slowly rose and taking hold of Thorp’s arm, clambered into the ditch.

“Get in, Bully,” said Jin Flag, “and lift up the legs.”

Thorp got into the ditch and raised the legs of the body — the body of Aubrey Bohun, muffled up in a cloak quite cold and stiff, the blood gushing out of the mouth.

“He has been shot in the back,” said Jin Flag.

“Surely,” said Thorp, recovering his courage.

“ Well, this is a deadly day ! ”

“ What shall we do ? ” asked Jin.

“ We must put it in the cart and drive back to town, as fast as we can,” said Thorp. “ We mus’nt be found with a dead body. ’Tis manslaughter.”

“ Is that the law ? ” said Jin.

“ ’Tis the law of the land,” explained Bully Thorp. “ He who finds a dead man, and giveth no notice to the magistrates, is guilty of manslaughter, without trial.”

“ Pull away then,” said Jin—“ as I’m a sinner, if I don’t feel as it were Doomeday.”

“ I’m all of a shake,” said the bully, “ t’was a sweet young gentleman.”

“ T’was my best friend,” said Jin.

“ T’was every man’s friend,” said Thorp.

“I’d have gived my life for him any day,” said Jin.

“And so would I,” said the bully. “It always go’ed a’gin my conscience at the ’lection to be t’other side.”

“I knew that Bully,” said Jin Flag blubbering.”

“’Tis the most greivous morning as I ever seed. My poor young Missus—’Tis a break-heart business.”

“And who’s the murderer? I am thinking,” said Thorp.

“Murder will out,” said Jin Flag, “he could not have done it himself.”

“’Tis in the back. How came he here? with his cloak on. T’was a night business I am thinking, for he has been long gone.”

“I can’t drive Thorp, and that’s the truth



on't," said Flag, giving up the whip and reins, "Squire Bohun murdered!"

They drove on as fast as they could, 'till they were in sight of the Tom and Jerry shop when Thorp ran forward and borrowed a blanket which he threw over the body, and thus they proceeded until they reached Fanchester when they stopped at the Rose, and Thorp remaining with the cart which had driven into the yard. Jin Flag went in to break the news to the landlord.

The host and his principal waiter soon bustled out with countenances of mysterious consternation, and carried in the body and placed it on the table of the large room, which was wont to be the scene of the meeting of the deceased's committee. The Mayor and Town Clerk, who was also the Coroner for the

county, were then summoned, and expresses were sent to Mr. Chace, Mr. Molesworth, Mr. Gainsborough, Senior, Mr. Latimer and other of the neighbouring magistrates. In the meantime dark rumours began to circulate, crowds collected before the Rose and in various parts of the town, and ever and anon a magistrate on horseback trotted up to the hotel. At length it was impossible any longer to conceal the terrible truth. A murder had been committed and the murdered person was their beloved member. The awful consternation that pervaded the whole town cannot be described. On a sudden all business seemed to stop, many shut up their shops and ran to the Rose, and the bells of all the churches tolled.

The depositions of Jin Flag and Bully Thorp were taken before the Mayor, and two Alder-

men, Mr. Molesworth, Mr. Latimer, and Dr. Maxwell. The principal servants of the household were summoned. The coroner proceeded to hold his inquest. We draw up the result of the evidence from the County Chronicle.

The valet of Mr. Bohun proved, that his master dined at home alone on the preceding day at seven o'clock, having past the morning as usual in riding and other customary amusements. His master returned about three o'clock having taken a ride with Mr. George Gainsborough. After remaining sometime with his master, and smoking, Mr. George Gainsborough had returned home. Supposed that his master went out after dinner, was in the habit of occasionally doing so. The household never knew when Mr. Bohun went out to take a stroll, as he stepped into the park from the

dining-room. His master was in his usual spirits. Could offer no conjecture whatever on the catastrophe.

Several others of the domestics gave the same unsatisfactory evidence. The jury desired to see Mr. George Gainsborough. Mr. Trueman, who was in attendance to give evidence respecting the nature of the wound, said that Mr. George Gainsborough was extremely ill, but thought that he might attend without any very serious danger. An hour elapsed before his arrival. He came in a carriage attended by his father.

This witness is described by the county paper as the most intimate friend of the deceased. His appearance excited the greatest commiseration. He appeared absolutely overwhelmed with grief. He was quite pale, his

limbs tottered—he leant upon his father's arm the whole time that he gave his evidence, and never ventured even to glance at the body. He was listened to with breathless attention.

George Gainsborough, Esq., deposed that he was on terms of extreme intimacy with the deceased, whom he had known abroad—that the deceased yesterday was about to call at Oakfield, he did not therefore go in, but invited witness to ride with him, who consented. After a short time, they arrived at Bohun castle. Witness remained chatting and smoking with deceased for some time—Deceased was in excellent spirits. Deceased invited witness to remain to dinner, but witness declined the invitation as he did not feel very well. On arriving at Oakfield, witness felt much worse, and

was shortly taken so very unwell, that he was obliged to send for Mr. Trueman.

Being earnestly pressed upon the point whether he knew of any circumstance that could throw light upon the catastrophe, witness for some time hesitated. He said that it was very painful to speak only upon suspicion, but he intimated that there might have been some amour between the deceased and a woman of the name of Thurston, and that jealousy might perhaps account for the tragical event.

A clue seemed now obtained. Constables in a post chaise were immediately dispatched for Thurston and his wife. Thurston was from home, but his wife was without loss of time brought to the Inquest. She had heard nothing of the awful event, and was of course very

much shocked when she was introduced into a room with the dead body of Mr. Bohun exposed—but her shock indicated no guilt. Being pressed upon the point in question, she for a long time declined giving any information, as she declared such queries were most unjust and unfair: at length soothed by the kind manner in which she was treated by Mr. Molesworth, and somewhat alarmed by Dr. Maxwell's threats, she offered to communicate to Mr. Molesworth and Mr. Latimer in private.

Although such information was not evidence it was considered the most expedient course to comply with her offer, and accordingly she retired with the two magistrates into another room. She confessed to them, casting down her eyes and blushing deeply, that she had met Mr. Bohun in company with Mr. George Gains-

borough the morning of the preceding day, that she had been acquainted with him before, that he spoke to her aside, that he said it was probable that he might be walking that way in the evening about nine o'clock. That accordingly about nine o'clock she put on her cloak, and walked about a hundred yards up the lane. She did not walk further, for she had nothing to fear, her husband was absent from home. She said that she remained in the vicinity of her house until eleven o'clock and then, supposing Mr. Bohun had changed his mind, she returned home. Being asked whether she heard the report of a gun during the time she was out, she replied in the negative.

The magistrates returned to the great room and said that the secret communication of the woman Thurston authorised them in examining



her husband. As the day was now advanced, and Thurston, was a man not very ready to meet with the Inquest was adjourned until the next morning.

But the next morning brought no satisfaction, for Thurston appeared and proved the most satisfactory alibi that was ever offered to the consideration of a jury. At six o'clock on the preceding day, Thurston had attended a benefit club to which he belonged at the Compasses, a small public house on a heath seven miles distant. There he got very tipsy, and as his home was a long way off, he had slept, as well as several members of the fraternity, in an adjoining barn. He had not quitted the Compasses until the afternoon of the following day.

No other evidence was offered or could be obtained, and the jury therefore brought in a

verdict of “Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.” Great rewards were offered by the Crown, by the county and by the relatives of Mr. Bohun to discover the murderer, no exertion was spared that human energy could command. From Colonel Neville to Jin Flag all felt alike interested—But hitherto their efforts have been absolutely vain. The same impenetrable mystery still envelopes the fate of the unfortunate and brilliant Bohun!—

THE END OF VOL. II.

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